ADELINE St. JULIAN;

OR,

THE MIDNIGHT HOUR.

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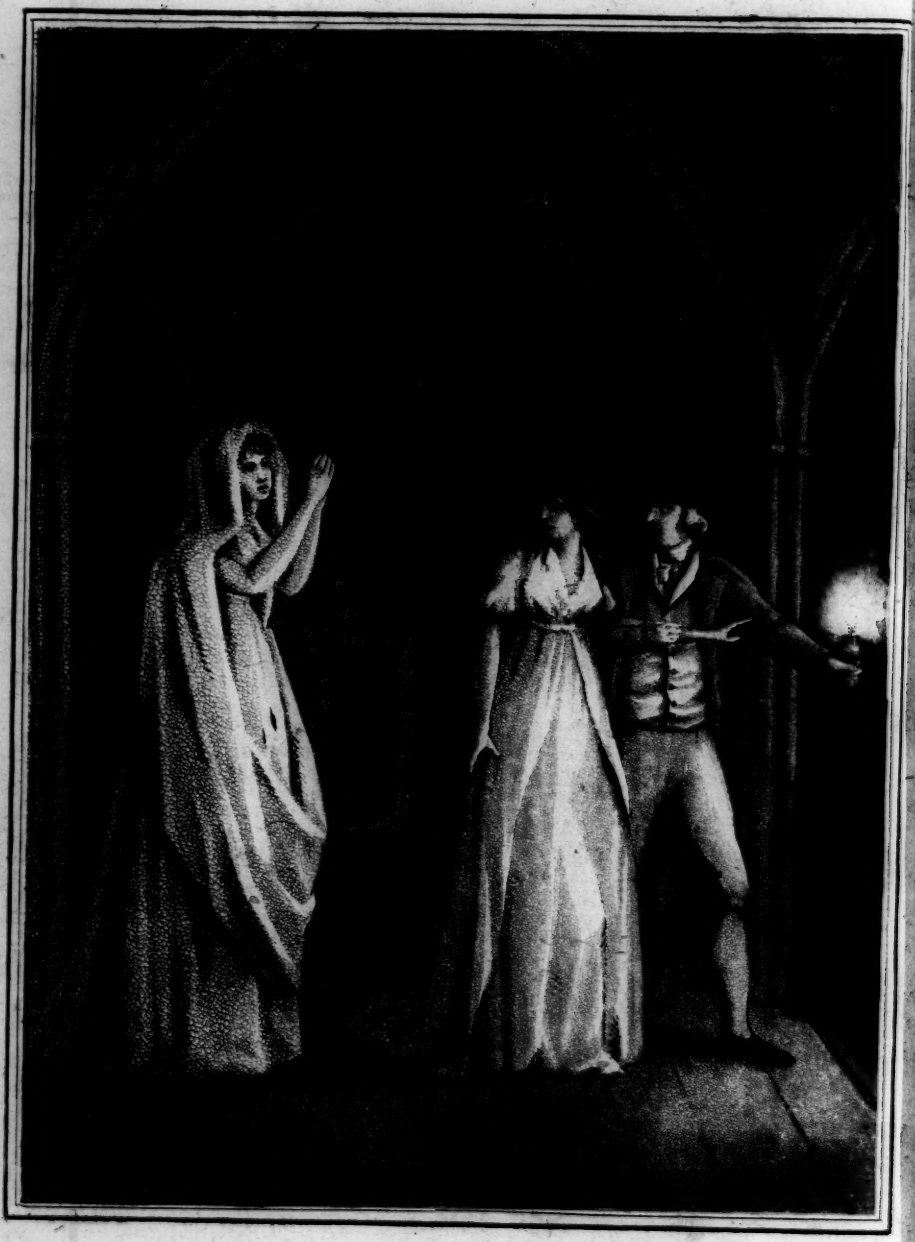

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ADELINE St. JULIAN;

OR,

THE MIDNIGHT HOUR.

A NOVEL.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

BY MRS. ANNE KER,
AUTHOR OF THE HEIRESS DI MONTALDE, &c.

VOLUME I.

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BRITISH MUSEUM

DEDICATION.

TO LADY JERNINGHAM.

MADAM,

THE Productions, properly ſtyled Romances, the ſtory being taken from the middle ages, are in general allowed to afford a bolder and more free ſcope for invention and imagery, than thoſe which aſſume for their foundation tranſactions of a later date. The fortified caſtle of the feu-

dal

dal tyrant, and the ſubterraneous grotto, which ſerves alternately as the aſylum of ſuffering virtue, and as the den of the midnight aſſaſſin, are equally precluded by the population and the policy of modern Europe.

By recurring, therefore, to an earlier epoch, the trials of the human heart may be more ſtrongly depicted, and the ſympathy of the reader excited in the ſame degree, towards afflicted virtue and perſecuted merit. Even thoſe who contend that more of inſtruction is to be derived from peruſing the tales of modern times, will not deny, that deeper impreſſions are to be made by reverting to ſcenes which are rendered aweful, and, if the phraſe be allowed, *embrowned* by the touch of antiquity. In thoſe times the vicious had

had much more frequent opportunities of pouring affliction on the good. There is, therefore, a greater variety of events to be ſelected for the purpoſe of exemplifying this great moral —"That the power of the wicked is tranſient, and their puniſhment certain; and that innocence, though oppreſſed by injuſtice, if ſupported by patience, ſhall finally triumph over misfortune."

It was with this view of the ſubject, Madam, that the following Tale of "ADELINE ST. JULIAN, or the MIDNIGHT HOUR, was written, and ſubmitted to your patronage. You, who, to an high place in ſociety, lend the beſt luſtre of example, it was conſidered by the Author, could not peruſe, without ſome degree of intereſt,

intereſt, a tale, which, whatever may be its other merits or defects, has for its object, to inculcate perſeverance in virtue, and becoming firmneſs under unjuſt perſecution.

The gracious manner in which you were pleaſed to honor the little Work, thus offered, with your high ſanction, claims, and has the ſincereſt thanks of,

MADAM,

Your obliged

and devoted ſervant,

THE AUTHOR.

January, 1800.

ADELINE ST. JULIAN;

OR,

THE MIDNIGHT HOUR.

CHAP. I.

NEAR the town of St. Amans, in the province of Languedoc; which, in the year 1632, was ſituated on the border of a foreſt, called the foreſt of St. Amans; which foreſt, ſince that period, has been greatly diminiſhed; ſo that at the preſent time, there remains little more than a cluſter of trees: but in the year 1632, was very extenſive.

On the ſkirts of the foreſt of St. Amans, was an elegant villa, the country reſidence

of the Baron de Semonville, a nobleman of an ancient and diſtinguiſhed family, and whoſe character was unblemiſhed. He was a widower, with one only ſon, named Alphonſo, who was the delight of his declining age. Alphonſo had juſt entered his twenty-firſt year; when, in the ſummer, they quitted the gay ſcenes of Paris, for the ſweet retirement of St. Amans, and came to ſpend a ſhort time at their favourite rural reſidence; and ſeveral of his juvenile friends came with him, in order to paſs the time away the more agreeable.

One night as he was returning from a viſit at the adjacent town, in company with two of his friends, Guſtavus de Biron, and Frederic Vernueil, and their ſervants; being obliged to paſs acroſs a part of the foreſt, they were ſuddenly ſurpriſed at hearing the ſound of a guittar, accompanied by the ſweeteſt voice they had ever heard,

heard, which induced them to ſtop and liſten. On a ſudden, the voice was huſhed, but in a few moments the enchanting notes ſounded from a diſtant part, without their perceiving any perſon to have moved. —" This is very extraordinary," exclaimed Alphonſo, " let us proceed and diſcover, who ſings at this late hour."—They inſtantly quitted their horſes, and leaving them with their ſervants, the three young gentlemen preſſed forward into the foreſt, as ſilent as poſſible, directing their ſteps towards the place from whence the voice ſeemed to proceed.—It was again ſilent, which much grieved Alphonſo, whoſe heart was already bent on ſome enterpriſe, and the ſweetneſs of the voice had too forcibly caught his attention, to ſuffer him to relinquiſh the purſuit.—They ſtood ſtill to liſten; no ſound diſturbed the ſilence that reigned on the ſereneſt night ever remembered.

Vexed at their diſappointment, they were about to return, when the charming notes of a pathetic ſong again ſtruck their attentive ears, and riveted them to the ſpot in ſilent rapture. It ſeemed to proceed from quite a diſtant part of the foreſt, to what they had before heard:—Alphonſo, was for continuing the ſearch, but his friend Guſtavus withheld him, ſaying, "what would you purſue?—a fairy in all probability, for it flies as we approach, or like the ſyren it may lead us into ſome ill,—robbers, or ſome other danger equally diſtreſſing, and we may be bewildered in the foreſt: be adviſed, our number is but few: we will return to our ſervants, and be better attended."

Alphonſo ſilently acquieſced, though his heart ſeemed fixed on the ſtrange voice he had heard; and they ſoon regained the border of the foreſt, where they had left their ſervants.

Having

Having related to them their deſign of returning into the foreſt; Euſtace, the ſervant of Alphonſo, who had been his faithful attendant ſome years, found means to diſſuade them from it for the preſent; alledging, that he had heard it reported the foreſt was haunted, for this ſinging had been continued ſeveral months, and it was well known, no one lived near the foreſt, but the Baron de Semonville; and was it reaſonable to ſuppoſe, that a lady (for it was remarked to ſound like a female voice,) ſhould continually come to that ſolitary foreſt at night? and though *he* did not believe that the foreſt was haunted, yet there were many that *did*.

After ſome little altercation, Alphonſo ſuffered himſelf to be perſuaded to return, though the enchanting voice ſtill ſeemed to vibrate in his ears.

The next day he was extremely thoughtful; his mind ſtill run on the ſinger, and

he ſought an opportunity of leaving the houſe unobſerved, and walking alone to the foreſt; he retraced every part where they had traverſed the preceding evening, but found it to be a fruitleſs ſearch, and was compelled to return, anxious and diſſatisfied, to his home, where he waited till night, when he determined again to viſit the ſpot; but meeting his friend Guſtavus, he inſiſted on accompanying him.

Nothing in the leaſt ſatisfactory occurred, and ſeveral following nights they went to the foreſt, but without ſucceſs; yet they as often heard the melody of beautiful muſic: his mind grew penſive, and ſaddened with the gloom of melancholy; his thoughts ſeemed entirely fixed on the heavenly voice he had heard in the foreſt; when he ſpoke, it was concerning the charming muſic; and every thing grew inſipid. His two friends made their viſit much ſhorter than was their firſt intention,

for

for the ſadneſs of Alphonſo was a great impediment to their vivacity.

The Baron de Semonville's parental tenderneſs, could not refrain obſerving the change; and anxious for the happineſs of his Alphonſo, endeavoured, by forcing him into company, to alleviate the dejection that viſibly hung on his mind; and being appriſed of his nightly viſits to the foreſt of St. Amans, ſtrove to ridicule his attachment to a ſylph or fairy, or ſome being without a name.—"You know my ſon," ſaid he, "I greatly value your peace, nor do I ever wiſh to oppoſe your inclinations; as I truſt you will never diſhonour me, by an alliance I ſhould be aſhamed to own; but now, you have fallen in love, with you know not what; you imagine that, as the voice is ſo very charming, it muſt proceed from the mouth of ſome *very charming person*:—regain your reaſon Alphonſo, —if you were fortunate enough to ſee that

perſon, your ſentiments might change,"—"Would to heaven! I could," replied Alphonſo—"And I beg for once, you will ſo far indulge me, as to go with me to night, and convince yourſelf of the charming ſounds, let it proceed from whom, or what it will."—The Baron agreed to his requeſt, and when night came, he conſented to go with Alphonſo.

They had not proceeded many paces into the foreſt, when ſoft muſic floated in the air, but no voice could be heard. The Baron de Semonville was ſomewhat alarmed at the odd circumſtance; and while they ſtood liſtening, a pathetic air was ſung, that increaſed his ſurpriſe: the voice was harmony itſelf, but it ſoon died away, and was heard no more, though the Baron and Alphonſo waited a conſiderable time in hopes of its return.

The moon now ſhone beautifully as they retired from the interior of the foreſt, and falling

falling on an arch formed by the interwoven branches of the ſpreading trees, diſcovered a tall female form, habited in white. The Baron de Semonville remarked to his ſon, the ſingular appearance at that late hour.—" Is it a phantom ?—I'll reſolve my doubts !"—exclaimed Alphonſo, ruſhing from his father, and purſuing the object of his ſearch, but it was gone—and fruitleſs was a long and tedious ſearch, aided by the brightneſs of a refulgent moon.—The Baron de Semonville was as poſitive as his ſon, that they had ſeen a very elegant female form in the arch, and though the purſuit was inſtantaneous, no one could be found.

It was with reluctance, the Baron could draw Alphonſo from the foreſt ; neither could ſuggeſt a reaſon for the muſic, nor the appearance, which (for the firſt time) had met Alphonſo's eyes,—it ſeemed ſo beautiful, that the Baron entertained but

little hopes of reaſoning his ſon from the ſtrange extravaganza that poſſeſt his mind.

Vexed at his repeated diſappointments, Alphonſo fell ſick, and continued ſo for above three weeks, unable to viſit the enchanting foreſt; but the myſterious object it concealed was never abſent from his mind, although he had little hopes of ever diſcovering who it really was; day and night he had ſearched, and waited in the foreſt, but never was fortunate enough to penetrate the myſtery of its viſitor.—Once only, for a moment, he had ſeen a form that had engroſſed his thoughts ever ſince, —uſeleſs, he feared, would be any further attempt, though his heart ſtill lingered in that ſcene of ſolitude.—The air was neceſſary for his recovery, and by the repeated intreaties of his father, he endeavoured to baniſh thoſe unfavourable ideas from his mind, and ſtrove to feel repoſe—

he

he did ſo—but the taſk was too painful to be endured; for as his health amended, every night he could quit the houſe unobſerved, his melancholy thoughts led him to the foreſt, where, wandering in that ſequeſterated ſpot—ſilent and alone, for many hours, he would return to his father's, unable to penetrate the myſtery that ſurrounded it.

CHAP. II.

FINDING every effort ineffectual, he at length gained fortitude to quit a place that had robbed his bosom of content. He informed the Baron de Semonville of his willingness to depart from St. Amans, and wished to go to their house at Paris, in hopes the gaities of that dissipated city might banish the idea that at present possest every thought.

Joyfully acceptable was the proposal. The Baron de Semonville lost no time in removing from a place, that had been so fatal to his dear Alphonso's peace, for Alphonso was the only remaining heir of a noble family, and the Baron's feelings were doubly wounded:—first, for Alphonso's sake, whose unhappiness preyed most powerfully on the heart of his father; and next,

next, the Baron had long wiſhed an alliance with the noble family of Montmorenci. Elinor de Montmorenci, heireſs of the Count, had (as was ſuppoſed,) a great eſteem for Alphonſo, and each family wiſhed for their union.

Soon after their arrival at Paris, the Baron de Semonville took an opportunity of revealing to his ſon, the wiſh of his heart; and, in hopes to eraſe his attachment to the viſionary charmer, intreated him to conſider Elinor de Montmorenci, as a lady he much wiſhed to acknowledge for his daughter. Alphonſo appeared hurt at the propoſal, though he eſteemed Elinor; for his mind ſtill dwelt with the charming recluſe; but reaſon gaining the aſcendant over inclination, and being fearful of offending the beſt of fathers by a refuſal, aſſured him he would exerciſe every effort to baniſh the fair unknown, and endeavour to acknowledge the beautiful,

tiful, the all-accompliſhed Elinor, miſtreſs of his heart.

In a few months, Alphonſo gained ſo great an aſcendant over himſelf, as to ſeem eaſy with regard to the perſon who ſeemed to charm him in the foreſt of St. Amans; he ſeldom or ever mentioned her, and the Baron de Semonville as cautiouſly avoided any converſation leading that way. Alphonſo tacitly and indifferently yielded to the will of his father and the Count de Montmorenci. And Elinor, in obedience to her father's choice, conſented to become the wife of Alphonſo. But Elinor could not help ſecretly obſerving, that Alphonſo's love appeared to be actuated by his father's command, as his attentions were not paid with the warmth of a lover. —Elinor's heart was engaged—not to Alphonſo;—but ſhe made no objection to the joint requeſt of her father and the Baron de Semonville, and ſilently ſubmitted

to

to the will of the Count, hoping, that by paying the ſtricteſt obedience to her father's commands, ſhe might derive a conſolation from acting with duty to a parent ſhe had ever revered, and ſerenity might be reſtored to her breaſt.—She knew Alphonſo to be amiable—ſhe had ever eſteemed him, but at times her heart revolted from the idea of ſubmitting to a marriage, where ſhe had not a heart to beſtow. Her motives for ſo ſtrange a conduct will be known hereafter.

Alphonſo, on the other hand, had obſerved a ſort of melancholy, apparently the reſult of ſome ſecret ſorrow, in Elinor de Montmorenci: he perceived that ſhe endeavoured (as much as poſſible, or common politeneſs would allow) to avoid him, and was hurt, that the friendſhip exiſting between them from infancy, ſhould now withdraw itſelf from his confidence; but as ſhe was the perſon deſtined for his bride, he

he paid her every reſpect; but a lover's aſſiduous attention was not in his power to give.

Time inſenſibly rolled away, and only one month remained before the marriage was to take place. Every preparation was making for the approaching feſtival, and the Baron de Semonville having very particular buſineſs to ſettle at La Salvetat, a town about ſeven miles diſtant from his reſidence at St. Amans—Alphonſo accompanied him.

Unluckily for the Baron, Guſtavus de Biron happened to be on a viſit at that place, and after Alphonſo had eſcorted his father to his friends, he took a walk out with Guſtavus.

"You are the very perſon, I ſo much wiſhed to ſee," ſaid Guſtavus de Biron, "for I have ſomething to tell you, concerning your fair viſion, (for ſuch I believe muſt ſtill call it) in the foreſt.

Alphonſo

Alphonſo eagerly inquired if he had gained any information.—" Nothing particular," replied his friend, " but accidentally being rather late one night in paſſing the foreſt, I chanced to hear the ſweet muſic, we ſo eagerly liſtened to; on a ſudden I thought I ſaw a female form dart acroſs the gloom; —I diſmounted, and purſued it, but it eluded my ſearch, and I returned much diſappointed.—Since then I confeſs I have had the curioſity to go ſeveral times; and laſt night I diſcovered a neat arbour formed of the twining branches of trees. Being rather fatigued and fearleſs of danger, I ſunk down on the moſſy bank, and the ſtillneſs of a lovely night drew me into a ſlumber. How long I ſlept, I cannot tell, but I was awakened by a moſt heavenly voice, accompanied by a guittar—I ſtarted —but anxious to learn who could ſo harmonioufly charm me, I kept my place, and ſat ſilent as death.—The ſound was

near,

near, but it drew more near; and I distinctly heard the words of a song, which we have frequently admired at the Opera, at Paris. At length a very elegant female form entered the arbour, and seating herself at the extremity of the mossy bank, on which I was sitting, began to play,"—"Oh, heaven!"—exclaimed Alphonso, "why was I debarred so great a happiness? but, my friend, I am interrupting you, forgive me, and proceed."

"What?" replied Gustavus, "are you going to be married to the lovely Elinor de Montmorenci, whose beauty is proverbial, and there is not one of your friends but envy your happiness, in being blest with the beautiful Elinor for a bride; yet can you love a shadow? for by heaven I almost believe it is one."—"Speak not of Elinor de Montmorenci," said Alphonso, "but in pity to your friend's impatience, pray go on."

"I

"I was ſaying," returned Guſtavus, "that ſhe ſat on the bank near me.—I ſtrove to ſuppreſs my breath, leſt ſhe ſhould hear any one was there. As I ſat in the ſhade, I had a full view of a very fine countenance, for a veil which ſhe wore was caſt back, and the moon which ſhone clear and unclouded, allowed me to ſee, without being ſeen. "*O goddess of the night!*" ſaid ſhe, fervently, and which ſounds ring in my ears at this moment,—"Let the ſhades of obſcurity envelope the wanderings of thy Adeline—let no mortal intrude on the ſecret haunts of this dreary foreſt.—*Hark!* ſure I hear a ſound—perhaps the tyrant comes,—his malice reaches beyond the grave."—A ruſtling was heard that made her ſtart. I roſe up alſo to intercept her flight, but ſhe fled paſt me with amazing rapidity, and in an inſtant vaniſhed from my ſight. I need not tell you how vexed I was, and how

ſeverely

ſeverely I blamed my ſtupidity in ſuffering her to leave me in ſuch uncertainty; but it was owing to my fear of ſurpriſing her, that made me over cautious. And thus, my dear friend, ended my laſt night's adventure in the foreſt."

The words of Guſtavus de Biron, made a deep impreſſion on the mind of Alphonſo. He grew more thoughtful, and replied, "Guſtavus, you muſt not blame my folly, for certainly it is a folly, and I aſſure you, I have ardently ſtrove to baniſh every thought leading to thoſe romantic ideas, which have too long occupied my mind. But I feel it impoſſible to eraſe the fatal impreſſion of that charming being, for I will not be perſuaded but it is an exiſting being that haunts the foreſt of St. Amans.—Never ſince that night, wherein you and Frederic de Vernueil accompanied me, have I felt a moment's eaſe.—You ſpeak of Elinor de Montmorenci; I allow ſhe

is

is beautiful, elegant, and moſt amiable, her manners ſweetly engaging, and every thing that is worthy or eſtimable, centres in her.—Ought that Elinor to receive a huſband, who has not a heart to beſtow? and what an ingrate ſhall I be to make that lovely woman miſerable.—It is true, that in obedience to the wills of our fathers, our hands are engaged, and I wiſh to obey the Baron de Semonville implicitly, that I may add peace to his declining years, though peace ever after, (I greatly fear,) will be a ſtranger to my boſom. I endeavour to feel content in his preſence, and force a cheerfulneſs when in company, that ill accords with what my heart endures; but tranquillity flies from your friend, whenever his ſaddened thoughts return to the foreſt, and its myſterious inhabitants.—Even now, I am eager to fly to that enchanting ſolitude; but I will ſtrive to conquer this abſurd deſire, and

if

if I could but forget—Alas! vain is the hope, for my heart has dwelt on this fair unknown, for many months. Come, let us return to La Salvetat, leſt I am guilty of a folly, heaven knows, how ardently I wiſh to avoid."

Guſtavus willingly conſented, they returned to La Salvetat, and paſſed the day agreeably; but Alphonſo could not refrain, at intervals, mentioning the ſubject that lay ever near his heart.

CHAP.

CHAP. III.

ON the following day, as Alphonſo was paſſing by a ſhop in the town, his eye was caught by the diſplay of the moſt beautiful embroidery he thought he had ever ſeen. He ſtopped to obſerve, and ſeeing a white ſattin of more than common elegance, richly embroidered in ſilver, he thought of purchaſing it, as a preſent for Elinor. He entered the ſhop, and having made his purchaſe, was about to quit, when he fancied he would chooſe an elegant waiſtcoat for himſelf, but there not being one to his taſte, he ſat down to deſcribe a pattern to be executed for him.

The miſtreſs of the ſhop could not exactly aſcertain the time it would be finiſhed, as the perſon, who did her work, was not

not preſent, but luckily this was the day ſhe uſually called to take orders.

While they were ſpeaking, a very neat, and apparently-elegant young woman, entered the ſhop, which proved to be the embroiderer; the gentility of her manner, and engaging accent, riveted his attention; a voice ſo ſweet, ſunk deeply into his heart, and he roſe from his ſeat in anger with himſelf, that every charming voice ſhould make ſuch an impreſſion on him. The face he had not ſeen, for ſhe wore a large cap, a bonnet and deep veil, and a long cloak, tyed cloſe round the neck, and reaching almoſt to the ground, concealed her perſon.

Alphonſo had an opportunity of ſpeaking to her, on account of explaining the pattern he deſigned, and requeſted to know, (as his ſtay in La Salvetat would be ſhort,) how ſoon it was poſſible to have it? —She replied, "in one week, from this day,

day Sir, I cannot poſſibly get it completed before."—" That will do," ſaid Alphonſo, and he then quitted the ſhop.

But before he reached home, a thought ſtruck him, that there was an extreme ſimilarity in the accent of this young perſon, and the voice he had heard in the foreſt of St. Amans, and blamed himſelf for not continuing a longer converſation. —" I will return," ſaid he, " and if poſſible, reſolve my doubts—how thoughtleſs a being am I ?" Thus ſaying, he immediately repaired to the ſhop.

Unluckily for Alphonſo, the perſon had left it, and he was obliged to frame an excuſe that he had forgot ſomething, in order to make inquiries concerning this young woman. " Where can I find her ?" ſaid he, " I wiſh to have a waiſtcoat alſo finiſhed for my father, and will go and give her the order, if you will be ſo

kind to direct me, as she says she shall not be here till this day week."

"That I really cannot inform you, Sir; I never did know where she lived," said the shopkeeper.

"Not know!" exclaimed Alphonso, "that is very strange indeed, that you should employ a person whose residence you are unacquainted with."

"I will tell you, Sir," replied the shopkeeper, "I really never did ask where she lived particularly—I can perceive she wishes to conceal her abode; every week, as constant as the day; nay, I may say, the hour comes, I am sure of seeing her—she is punctual to her promise whenever she undertakes any thing. I have agreed to take every article she and her mother does, and I sincerely believe, by her manner, that their work is more for amusement than for a livelihood: for, when first she brought some very fine

fine embroidery to me, and I wiſhing to know where ſhe lived, on account of knowing who I truſted with my goods, ſhe told me ſhe had particular reaſons why her abode was a ſecret, and to eraſe every fear or doubt of my property being ſafe, ſhe always leaves the value of the ſattin, ſilk, or muſlin, and is, as I ſaid before, duly faithful to her promiſe.—This, Sir, is all I know, and I am ſorry to inform you, that if I have no pattern here that will ſuit you, you muſt really ſtay till next week."

Alphonſo could but ill conceal his chagrin; yet he forbore to make any further inquiries leaſt it might alarm the ſhopkeeper, but replied, that the waiſt-coat was for an elderly gentleman, and he wiſhed it one uncommonly elegant, as well as ſuitable to his age; he muſt ſubmit to the delay, as he ſhould like to conſult the embroiderer on the occaſion;

therefore, would defer calling till next week, and then explain how he choſe it ſhould be done—then bowing, he left the ſhop a ſecond time.

The next week was one of extreme anxiety and impatience, and he knew not for why—becauſe he could not conceive it poſſible that the young woman he had ſeen, had any connection with the perſon in the foreſt of St. Amans. At length the wiſhed-for day arrived, and he eagerly repaired to the ſhop.

Upon entering, how great was his ſurprize to hear the ſound of a guittar, accompanied by a voice which was ſinging the very identical ſong he had liſtened to with ſuch rapture in the foreſt; the voice was melodious, and he thought it the very error of his ſenſes, in imagining it the ſame voice that had charmed him in the foreſt of St. Amans. The ſhopkeeper haſtening

haſtening into the ſhop, rouſed him from the deep attention he ſeemed plunged in.

" Your waiſtcoat is ready, Sir," ſaid ſhe, firſt breaking ſilence, and preſenting it; Alphonſo eagerly took it up, and paid her demand, being totally engroſſed by the captivating ſounds that made him negligent of every thing elſe:—at length, ſuddenly recollecting himſelf, he ſaid,—" The other waiſtcoat, Madam"—

" O, yes, Sir,—the other waiſtcoat; you can ſpeak of it to-day, if you pleaſe."

" Pray," ſaid Alphonſo, " tell me who is playing and ſinging ſo divinely in this houſe!—I am abſolutely charmed!"

" Why, Sir, it is a young perſon who does work for me, and who, ſometimes, when ſhe has a leiſure hour to ſpare, obliges me with a ſong, and plays a very favourite air of my poor dear daughter's," ſhaking her head,—" alas! while ſhe

ſings. I ſometimes think I hear her voice; and when ſhe plays, I really fancy it is my dear girl that charms me,—but my daughter, Sir, is dead." "Pray," ſaid Alphonſo, with great earneſtneſs, "was your daughter's name Adeline?"

"No, Sir, Matilda."

"Ah!" replied Alphonſo, ſeemingly diſappointed,—"Matilda, you ſay;—was it Matilda?"—Then recollecting himſelf, he ſaid,—"Will you be ſo kind to let me give the orders for this other waiſt-coat, if the perſon I hear playing is the one who did the work to this I now have, for I am rather in haſte."

"O, certainly, Sir;—will you pleaſe to walk into the parlour?"

There could not have been any thing ſo agreeable to Alphonſo's wiſhes:—he haſtily went into the parlour, his heart beating with unuſual emotion, regardleſs of interrupting the muſic or the ſong, for

for the perſon was ſtill ſinging. But what was his aſtoniſhment on beholding the moſt beautiful young lady he had ever ſeen; and though diveſted of her long cloak and bonnet, he immediately diſcovered, in this elegant and lovely female, the perſon who had embroidered his waiſtcoat.

At his entrance ſhe aroſe to receive him, —a roſy bluſh overſpread her lovely countenance, and a flutter of conſcious embarraſſment was viſible to his inquiring eyes, as ſhe averted her beautiful, blue eyes from his penetrating gaze. Every thought of what he came there about, was now loſt in admiration; he even fancied there was a ſimilitude in the form, the ſhape, and white garments of this perſon, and the charming viſion that had met his own and father's eyes in the foreſt. At length, fearful and tremulouſly approaching, and taking her hand, he

ſaid, "I may be miſtaken, Madam, and intreat your pardon for my ſeeming rudeneſs; but if you knew my motive, I am certain you would excuſe me. I think I have heard your voice before, and muſt alſo declare, that although near twelve months have elapſed ſince that time, the ſounds ſeem familiar to my ear, and muſt alſo confeſs, that the impreſſion they firſt made on my heart, has never, nor can ever, be eraſed by time or diſtance." She turned her timid, yet ſcrutinizing eyes towards him, and faltering, aſked where he had heard her?

"In the foreſt of St. Amans," replied Alphonſo, eagerly.—"In a foreſt!" replied the lady, ſmiling, and endeavouring to conceal a bluſh,—"that is very ſtrange, Sir,—you are certainly inclined to be merry when you relate, that a perſon was ſinging in ſuch a remote place as the foreſt of St. Amans."

"Why?"

"Why?" replied Alphonſo, rather uneaſy, "there is certainly ſomething very romantic in the thought, Madam;—but I poſitively aſſure you, I am not miſtaken; my father was with me one night, and heard it as well as me; and on a former night, I had two friends with me: no,—we really could not be miſtaken."

The lady here looking on her watch, and appearing inattentive to what Alphonſo had been ſaying, exclaimed, "bleſs me! how quickly the time has flown;—paſt twelve!—Sir, if you have any commands for me, be ſo kind to ſpeak, for I have already exceeded my hour;" and ſhe haſtened to put on her cloak to be going away.

Alphonſo was vexed at the interruption, being eager to diſcover who the perſon was, as ſhe abſolutely had made a powerful impreſſion on his heart; but ſeeing her ready to quit the place, he ſtrove to

recollect the waiſtcoat, and gave orders, though very imperfectly, for the ſame. She then, making a very graceful courteſy, left him.

Alphonſo was ſo ſtruck with the charms of her perſon,—ſo poſitive in his own mind, that it could be no other he had ſeen and converſed with, but the perſon he had liſtened to with ſuch rapture in the foreſt, that he determined, as ſoon as he reached home, to take horſe, and proceed to the foreſt of St. Amans; and, if poſſible, diſcover who was the real cauſe of his anxiety.

CHAP.

CHAP. IV.

LEAVING the ſhop, he proceeded to put his ſcheme in execution. He rode to his father's houſe at St. Amans, and leaving his horſe, went on foot, alone, and unattended, to the foreſt.

He wandered, as he imagined, through every receſs, explored every unfrequented path, to endeavour, if there was a poſſibility, of tracing any particular footſteps, till the ſetting ſun warned him of the time to return, and the ſhades of night appeared to fall unuſually faſt:—the ſolitude of the ſurrounding ſcene, the deepening gloom, his own ill ſucceſs, and repeated diſappointments, made him return, with a heavy heart, to regain the road.

As he was retiring, with penſive ſteps, and quite abſorbed in thought, the darkneſs of the night made him miſtake his way, and he ſtepped on a part that ſuddenly gave way, and fell through into a place he knew not where, ſeverely bruiſing himſelf by the rude maſs he fell againſt. Stunned by the fall, and agonized with pain, he became inſenſible, except by a diſmal groan, which ſometimes eſcaped his afflicted boſom; nor did he recover any recollection, till he found himſelf on an elegant bed, attended by the beautiful embroiderer, and an elderly lady, who were adminiſtering every thing for his recovery, by his bedſide.

When he firſt opened his eyes, and perceived who was near, he ſeemed to think it all illuſion, but the pain he felt when he moved, reminded him of what had happened, and brought every idea more forcibly to his mind.—He gazed wildly

wildly on the ladies, but more particularly on the young one, who apparently had been weeping, but, on whose lovely face, now shone a smile of unspeakable tenderness and joy, beaming through her tears.

"I would express," said Alphonso, "how much I am obliged to you for your generous care, but want words and strength, to explain what I feel; pray will you have the kindness to inform me where I am? and to whom I am indebted for the favours I now receive?"—

"At present," replied the elderly lady, "it is enough to inform you, that we are unfortunate, but nevertheless, our hearts most sensibly feel for the misfortunes of others, we found you in a distressful situation; led to the place, by the deep and seemingly dying groans, that sounded as if escaping from the bosom of some one, in acute pain, and thought ourselves in duty bound

bound to give every aſſiſtance to a fellow creature, in ſuch a deplorable ſtate.—I am happy to ſay, you have only received ſome ſevere bruiſes, and by the application I have adminiſtered, and a few days reſt, you will be able to leave my humble roof without any other effects than the remembrance; therefore, I intreat you be eaſy, and endeavour to compoſe yourſelf to reſt.—Alphonſo would have replied; but they earneſtly deſired him to ſeek repoſe, and ſoon after, left him.

What various ideas filled the mind of Alphonſo, and deprived him of the wiſhed for repoſe, imagination alone can form; every vain conjecture fluttered in his boſom: he knew not to whom he was indebted for the tenderneſs and care he received, nor where he was.—The young lady who had claimed his attention in the morning, was preſent; but how or why, all was a myſtery he was unable to penetrate.

trate. In the midſt of theſe confuſed ſenſations he fell aſleep, and obtained a calm repoſe, till the ſound of muſic ſeemed to ſwell at a diſtance, and awakened him.

Starting from his ſleep, he exclaimed, " who can that be?—The elderly lady, (who, during his ſleep,) had frequently viſited him, and was at that time ſitting by his bedſide, inquired what he meant?—" The muſic!" he replied, " the charming muſic that now delights our ears, the cauſe of my preſent misfortune, of my being burthenſome to your goodneſs, of every anxiety I have undergone for now, near twelve months."—The lady, (who believed his head was a little deranged,) ſpoke, endeavouring to argue him out of his ſtrange ideas; but he ſeemed reſolved on knowing who it was, that was now playing.

" I

"I believe it is a poor wanderer," ſhe replied, "I often hear that muſic, it is now ſo very familiar to my ear, that I have taught myſelf to think very little of it."—"I believe," (haſtily interrupted Alphonſo,) "were I to ſpeak the true ſentiments of my mind, it is no other than your charming daughter; for this morning I ſaw her at a ſhop, at La Salvetat, and heard her angelic voice; I cannot, Madam, I am confident I cannot be miſtaken; and did you only know what I have ſuffered in mind, during a period of many months, and what I ſtill ſuffer—I am ſure, from the kindneſs I have experienced from you, you would have the goodneſs to ſet my longing heart at eaſe: Aſſured, in my own mind, that the beautiful creature I ſaw this morning, and heard ſing and play, was the ſame I knew to inhabit this foreſt, I determined to ſeek her, declare the ſentiments of a heart

that

that has long adored her, and endeavour to know my fate, when this unlucky accident befel me."

Alphonſo ceaſed,—for the pain he felt from his fall, deprived him of the power to utter more.—The lady he thought appeared confuſed, and ſeemed to anſwer evaſively, which increaſed Alphonſo's anxiety and curioſity: and ſhe ſuddenly quitted him, to prepare ſome nouriſhment, ſhe thought he was in need of, leaving him in a ſtate of ſuſpenſe and uncertainty he could ill ſupport at that time.

He roſe up in his bed to take a ſurvey of the apartment, but he felt almoſt unable to the taſk; the fall had affected his ſhoulder ſeverely, which cauſed him extreme pain.—By the light of a lamp which was placed on a table, he could perceive the room was very neatly and genteelly furniſhed, and adorned with many elegant paintings, among which, was an exact reſemblance

ſemblance of the charming young lady, who had ſo long engroſſed every wiſh of his heart.

While he was paying almoſt adoration to the inanimate charmer, the door of the apartment opened, and both ladies entered; the young one very elegantly dreſſed in white ſilk; and he immediately thought he recognized the form of the lovely viſion that once met his and his father's eyes, in the arch of the foreſt.—He ſunk on his pillow, overpowered with aſtoniſhment; the young lady, (whoſe name he heard was Adeline,) kindly advanced to his bedſide, and tenderly aſked how he found himſelf?

Alphonſo replied, "your kind attention, lovely Adeline, and your excellent mother, (for ſuch I believe her to be,) has made me well and happy; it is true, I feel pain from my fall,—but I ſhall for ever bleſs the accident that introduced me

to

to a ſight of you,—ſo long wiſhed, and ſo little expected."—" Spare your compliments, I beſeech you," ſaid Adeline, " till you are more recovered; at preſent I wiſh to know if there is any thing in our power we can do for you, to make your confinement eaſy:—I am happy to ſay, my mother does not imagine any danger will happen from your accident:—I ſhould be ſorry if I thought there would, and I feel myſelf much hurt, when I ſay, that ſituated as we are, the offſprings of misfortune, it is impoſſible to procure medical aſſiſtance; my mother, when ſhe next attends to your hurt, will be able to aſcertain its conſequences; and if there is a neceſſity, we muſt deviſe the means to have you removed, rather than you ſhould ſuffer by the profound ſecrecy, that at preſent involves us."

" I return you my ſincere thanks, charming Adeline," ſaid Alphonſo, " but want

want words and ſtrength to expreſs them adequate to my feelings.—There is but one thing that makes me uneaſy, I have a father, the Baron de Semonville; I came with him on very particular buſineſs, to La Salvetat, where he now is, though our country ſeat borders on this foreſt: he is the moſt tender and excellent of parents.—I judge what he muſt feel if I return not to night, (and that is impoſſible,) as he is ignorant that I have left La Salvetat, and ſhould I delay letting him know to-morrow that I am ſafe.—Deviſe the means, dear ladies, how he can be made acquainted, without interfering with the ſecrecy of your reſidence; my accident, and the pleaſure of finding myſelf near you, Adeline, have almoſt deprived me of the power of thought."

Adeline heſitated a ſhort time, at length replied, "I will eaſe the anxiety of the Baron de Semonville, and his Alphonſo.

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—It is impoſſible for me to procure any one to carry a letter to La Salvetat, I know no one near; but, with pleaſure, I will go myſelf, and leave a letter for him, at the poſt-houſe: pardon me, but I really muſt conceal where you are, even from your father, but will aſſure him of your ſafety, and that no care nor attendance ſhall be wanting to reſtore your health, for it muſt be mentioned you are not well, leſt he ſhould find himſelf hurt at your abſence."

Alphonſo was charmed with the propoſal, though he was ſorry Adeline ſhould be obliged to go herſelf, ſo far on his account:—he thanked her repeatedly, for her kind concern for his, and his father's happineſs, and was continuing to expreſs the fullneſs of a heart, ſenſible of every obligation; when ſhe ſtopped him—"Enough Alphonſo, you beſtow your thanks

thanks and praiſes ſo laviſhly, that I feel myſelf quite uneaſy, leſt you ſhould think you are not truly welcome.—I now wiſh to know if you will take any thing for ſupper, it is very late, my mother and I are going to eat ours; if it will not be too fatiguing, we will ſup with you, that we may be able to attend to you more particularly."

Alphonſo declared, that ſo far from their preſence being a fatigue, he ſhould be elated with the pleaſure of their company:—The ladies withdrew,—the table was ſet, and ſoon after a ſupper was ſerved in of Madame de Belmont's, (for that was the elderly lady's name,) preparing, ſuch as might ſuit her gueſt, the invalid.

Supper being ended, Madame de Belmont and Adeline retired, wiſhing Alphonſo a good repoſe; leaving him to

enjoy

enjoy his own thoughts, which were very fluctuating; but a happy sleep soon overtook him, which lasted some hours, and proved a salutary refreshment.

CHAP.

CHAP. V.

IN the morning, Adeline entered to inquire after his health, and to read the letter to him for his approbation, which ſhe deſigned for his father.—Breakfaſt was ſerved in, and Adeline took leave of him, to go to La Salvetat.

Alphonſo's ſpirits were cheerful, but he felt worſe from his fall, the bruiſes being more painful, than on the former night; he found himſelf unable to move out of bed that day, but Madame de Belmont aſſured him there was not the leaſt danger, and that time and care was alone requiſite to reſtore him.

Adeline returned towards ſun-ſet, having left her letter, and the evening paſt as the preceding.

Several

Several days elapſed, before Alphonſo was able to ſit up.—The care and unwearied aſſiduity of Madame de Belmont and Adeline during his confinement, increaſed his former affection.—He loved—he idolized Adeline, he tenderly revered the ſtill beautiful Madame de Belmont, who was not yet thirty-ſix; but misfortune and ſorrow, had deprived her cheeks of the roſes that formerly revelled there, and a ſaddened melancholy, which however had its charms, ſeemed to have prematurely ſhadowed a countenance, which, in the dear delightful days of youth and proſperity, apparently had no rival. Adeline was beautifully fair, her auburn treſſes, and eyes of heavenly blue, added charms to a moſt lovely engaging face, and form. Grace, elegance, and dignity, were equally blended in the charming perſon of Adeline.

Alphonſo recovered, but time inſenſibly rolled away, and he chid the fleeting hours as they paſſed, that every minute reminded him of the deprivation of that happineſs he enjoyed, in the preſence of Madame de Belmont, and her lovely daughter. It was eaſy for Madame de Belmont to perceive, by every word and action of Alphonſo, how much Adeline was miſtreſs of his heart, he never once attempted to conceal it, but avowed the long affection he had felt for her, as ſoon as he was able to ſpeak from his accident; ſhe even looked with pleaſure on the increaſing partiality, which was perceptable to any common obſerver, and thought the ſon of the Baron de Semonville, was not indifferent to her beloved Adeline:—ſhe hoped their affection might increaſe, that ſhe could be happy in ſeeing her the wife of Alphonſo.—In the private converſation of theſe ladies, Adeline did not heſitate

to

to declare ſhe preferred Alphonſo to every man ſhe had ever ſeen.

Adeline, during Alphonſo's ſtay, ſeldom left home, but endeavoured to cheer the ſolitary hours of pain and indiſpoſition, by ſinging and playing ſome very beautiful airs, for muſic was a ſcience in which ſhe was a great proficient, and every time he liſtened, the more fully he was convinced that Adeline was the perſon whoſe voice he had ſo often heard in the foreſt. In this enchanting ſociety, Elinor de Montmorenci was almoſt forgotten, the time nearly elapſed, in which they were to be united, a very chilling remembrance to Alphonſo, who now, favoured by fortune, with the preſence of the charming Adeline, whoſe eye ſeemed to declare, that her heart ſpoke in his favour; while Elinor appeared perfectly indifferent, though ever reſpectful; his

heart revolted every day more and more, and Adeline reigned ſupreme.

Ten days flew away rapidly, and ſorry was he they were paſt.—On the morrow was the day fixed that he ſhould take his leave, and quit thoſe, who next to his father, were moſt dear to him.

In the evening, when ſeated in interreſting converſation, Alphonſo expreſſed a deſire of knowing to whom he was indebted for the kindneſs he had received, and if they would ſo far oblige him with a detail of their being ſo retired, and having no other perſon in their abode, but themſelves, he pledged his honour to be ever ſilent and ſecret, if they thought him worthy of confiding it in his boſom, a boſom that muſt ever beat with gratitude and reſpect for Madame de Belmont, but whoſe love for the charming Adeline, knew no bounds.—Adeline bluſhed and reclined her head, but finding Madame de Bel-

de Belmont continue ſilent, ſaid, "do not doubt, my dear mother, the honour, the friendſhip, of Alphonſo de Semonville; I hope and truſt he has more regard for us than to expoſe our retreat to a dangerous enemy."—Alphonſo ſunk on his knee, and taking her hand, exclaimed, "Never!—let me here ſwear to you, deareſt Adeline!"—Adeline haſtily interrupted him, ſaying, "No—do not ſwear, for my feelings would be hurt if I doubted your veracity; how much more ſhould I ſuffer if you turned our enemy, for ſuch I ſhould think you if any ill conſequences ſhould ariſe from repoſing our troubles to your diſcretion. I feel inclined to believe you, Alphonſo, if my mother thinks proper."

Madame de Belmont ſaid, "ſince Adeline requeſts it, I will give you a narrative of our misfortunes,—my own heart, alſo, ſeems inclined:—

"My father was a very rich merchant in the city of Lyons;—I was his only child, and led to expect a very liberal fortune. Friendſhip, in early infancy, entwined its cheering bands round Eloize de Beauclair and myſelf; our friendſhip increaſed with our years, and in whatever company Eloize was, Sophia de Belmont was always of the party. Eloize was one year older than me; at the age of eighteen the Count St. Julian ſaw Eloize, fell violently in love with her, and ſoon after married her, and they left Lyons, for one of the Count's country ſeats.

"The ſeparation hung heavy on us both, but I fondly flattered myſelf, that I ſhould ſoon ſee the dear companion of my early years return to Lyons, as the Count had a ſeat near that city. But Eloize was now gone to the Chateau Bellevue, near Montauban, in the Province of Languedoc, which

which was a very elegant and favourite reſidence of the Count St. Julian's.

"Alas! too ſoon neceſſity compelled me to ſeek a refuge from misfortune, in the compaſſionate arms of my early friend. Repeated loſſes, crowded ſo faſt on my father, by the additional wrecks of ſeveral rich veſſels, then at ſea, that he was totally ruined: his creditors immediately aſſembled, without permitting him to aſcertain the extent of his unfortunate ſituation; which broke my father's heart in a few days, and I was left deſtitute.—All the flattering proſpects I had been taught to look forward to, were vaniſhed into air, and my troubles multiplied by the rapacity of a few unfeeling wretches.

"In this ſituation, when misfortune's haſty ſteps encompaſſed Sophia de Belmont, all thoſe, who in the ſmiling hour of proſperity, were rejoiced at my approach, and ſeemed to idolize my company, now de-

ſerted me.—Not knowing what to do, I at length, reſolved to write my ſituation to the only friend of my heart, my Eloize St. Julian, who had now been married about five months; truſting the ſincerity, that had always adorned her words and actions, would not, by the ſad appearance of preſent circumſtances, deſert me, as others had done.—She kindly anſwered my letter, but chid me for writing in ſuch an humble phraſe, and invited me to Montauban:—I attended, but felt my heart depreſſed, by the ſeverity of my misfortunes: formerly, I had been her equal in every thing,—now deprived of all, by relentleſs fortune, I yet thought myſelf happy in having Eloize, ſtill reſerved for me; I bleſt heaven for its bounty, and ſoon became her friend and companion, who, with the Count, generouſly allowed me a very pretty competency, ſufficient to ſupport me genteelly, and I had the unſpeakable

unſpeakable pleaſure of living under the ſame roof, with my dear and only friend, whom I more than ever valued.

"I now endeavoured to feel content,—to bleſs the Almighty for his goodneſs, in retaining me thoſe dear friends, when I was the ſport of capricious fortune, and began to look with indifference on all my former flattering, and pleaſing proſpects. Our joy was increaſed in the courſe of a few months, by the birth of a ſon, the delight of the Count, the rapture of a fond and tender mother, he was named after the Count his father, Victor.

"I need not add, how charming the time paſſed; the Counteſs enraptured with her ſon,—the Count happy that heaven had bleſſed him with one, the hope of their noble houſe,—the joy of their encreaſing years; for the Count St. Julian was the laſt of that family, and if he died without an heir, the title and eſtates devolved on

a very distant relation, with whom he had never been on very friendly terms.

"But how fleeting are all human hopes and expectations!—Victor had just attained the age of eighteen months, when one evening being taken out for the air, by his indulgent nurse, as was her custom, his parents were much alarmed, that as the dark of night advanced, they did not return.—Every moment brought with it increased anxiety:—ten, eleven o'clock came, and no one appeared:—servants were dispatched every way to find them, and to learn the cause of their stay, but they returned, after a fruitless search, having gained no intelligence whatever.

"We past a night of dreadful inquietude, waiting in eager expectation, the arrival of other servants, who had not yet returned. At length, a melancholy confirmation to our fears, was announced about six o'clock in the morning, when the body of the

nurse

nurſe was diſcovered, with the infant claſped in her arms, floating in a rivulet about a mile diſtant from the Chateau. At hearing this ſhocking recital, grief and deſpair ſeized the afflicted Counteſs, ſhe ſunk from her ſeat in a ſtrong fit, and I was alarmed for her life.—The Count was nearly frantic, wringing his hands in indeſcribable anguiſh; he appeared the picture of wretchedneſs,—never ſhall I forget that day:—but the Count ſeeing the unhappy ſtate of his beloved Eloize, it drew his attention from the irreparable loſs they had ſuſtained, to give every aſſiſtance to the Counteſs; who, we much feared, would not ſurvive the loſs of her ſon.

"Our dwelling was now turned from the manſion of bliſs, to deſpair:—The Counteſs recovered, but a dejection ever after, hung on her brow, and embittered every thought, nor could the expectation that a few months would bleſs them with ano-

ther child, any way abate the melancholy that took poſſeſſion of her mind. The Count, to the day of his death, lamented the loſs of his ſon, and like Eloize, looked with indifference on that time, that probably might bleſs them with another.

" Misfortunes now ſeemed to accumulate over the ill-fated houſe of St. Julian; for two months after the death of Victor, the Count, wandering to indulge the melancholy of his heart unſeen, as fearful to add to the ſorrows of the Counteſs, whoſe acute eye and feelings, watched every action of her unhappy huſband;—in one of thoſe evenings, when he quitted the Chateau Bellevue, to give way to his ſorrows, he never—never more returned; whatever accident befel him, no one could ever tell; for ſince that fatal night, he has never been heard of, which is aſtoniſhingly ſingular, for from that dreadful period, I have numbered eighteen miſerable years."

Adeline,

Adeline, at this melancholy part of Madame de Belmont's narrative, burſt into tears, unable to ſuppreſs the heart-rending ſighs, that broke from her boſom; having given way to the feelings of her heart, though the tears ſtill crept in mournful ſilence down her cheeks, ſhe ſaid, "pardon me, dear mother, for interrupting you, but whenever I hear you ſpeak of that dreadful day, wherein the Count, by ſome uncommon myſtery forſook his home, —an aweful grief—a ſenſation, unfelt on any other occaſion, ſeizes me, as if I were on the point of annihilation. I will endeavour to ſtifle thoſe chilling feelings, and no more impede the continuation of your recital—pray proceed."—

"I reſpect your tears, my much loved girl," ſaid Madame de Belmont, taking her hand, "and may you never know ſufferings like thoſe, experienced by the Counteſs

Counteſs St. Julian:" then addreſſing herſelf to Alphonſo, ſhe continued:

"It is impoſſible for me to deſcribe the grief of my ineſtimable friend, the Counteſs; misfortunes following ſo cloſe to each other, affected her health to that degree, that I feared ſhe would not ſurvive the birth of another child, who was now expected.

"Plunged into a ſtate of unutterable anguiſh and profound deſpair, which, every attempt of mine, would be ineffectual to explain, it was not leſſened by the arrival of M. Delarſonne, the heir at law to the unfortunate Count St. Julian, who came in about three weeks after the Count's ſtrange diſappearance, to claim his rights, and was much diſappointed, when he perceived, by the appearance of my friend, the expectation of another child.

"Under the borrowed garb of friendſhip, which ill concealed the ſatisfaction he felt

in

in diſtreſſing her, he attempted an explanation of the Count's myſterious abſence, and ſtrove to make her believe that ſome political opinions of the Count, were not approved by thoſe in power, and wiſhed her to caſt her thoughts that way, to account for her huſband's diſappearance. He alſo ſaid he had heard it hinted, that his eſtates would be ſeized on, and of courſe forfeited, but how true, he could not aſcertain, yet he had every reaſon to believe he had not been miſinformed, and that the Count's conduct merited the threatened puniſhment.

" The unhappy Counteſs, endured this aſtoniſhing harrangue, with extreme patience, but looking diſdainfully on M. Delarſonne, for his myſterious inſinuations, replied,—" 'Tis falſe,—the Count St. Julian, never had a thought in oppoſition to the will of the King; if there are wretches baſe enough to poiſon his good name,

name, and caſt a ſhade over his memory; may that God, who knows and ſees the hearts of all, puniſh thoſe, who have dared to throw ſuch malicious aſperſions on one, whoſe honour has ever been unblemiſhed; and may thoſe, who have been guilty of his death, in heaven's good time, receive the reward of their crimes."

"The Counteſs, without awaiting his reply, left the room.—He ſeemed mute with the effect her words had on him; his contracted brow and gloomy look, appeared to threaten vengeance, whenever he could put it in power, and he roſe to quit the houſe, muttering ſomething that ſeemed a threat, which was not clearly underſtood by the ſervant who waited in the room.

CHAP.

CHAP. VI.

THREE days after M. Delarſonne's viſit to the Chateau Bellevue, the counteſs was brought to bed of a daughter; and in leſs than a week after, I was much alarmed at her calling my attention to a moſt particular circumſtance."

"My friend!—My beloved Sophia," ſaid ſhe, "liſten with the niceſt exactneſs to what I am going to ſay; it is no viſionary caprice—it proceeds not from the weakneſs of my brain, by indiſpoſition, but is what my heart moſt fears. I dread M. Delarſonne;—I will act with caution,—if I have no ground for my fears it can do no harm to preſerve the laſt relic of the family of St. Julian.—Laſt night I had a moſt prophetic dream,—and ſometimes, I verily believe, dreams are

are ominous;—for once I will pay attention to it, and think I was forewarned by Heaven to preſerve my lovely girl."

Tears flowed abundantly as ſhe uttered theſe alarming ſenſations.—After a pauſe, ſhe proceeded:—"Laſt night, a fatal preſentiment, brought to my mind the ſad idea that my huſband periſhed by the hand of Delarſonne—my dream did not ſeem to pronounce the manner, but that it was ſo;—my ſon, my dear Victor, was alſo declared to be removed by his means;—but this, which is paſt, when I awoke, I imputed it to the error of fancy, as you know my grief for them has been unceaſing, I wonder not that I ſhould dream of them ſuffering in every dreadful ſituation;—and M. Delarſonne's behaviour to me, when he came to the Chateau Bellevue, perhaps made me encourage unfavourable thoughts of him—and my ſlumbers being broken with dreams of thoſe

ſo dear to me, might encourage erring fancy to act unjuſtly towards him:—Heaven knows how unhappy I ſhould be, if I ſuſpected any one wrongfully! but what followed alarmed me moſt!—Again, I fell into a ſlumber;—fancy, or ſomething more than fancy, once more preſented M. Delarſonne, at the head of a large party, come to demand my daughter!—he ruſhed into my room, and ſnatching her from my encircling arms, plunged a dagger to her innocent heart!—I ſhrieked with horror at that ſhocking ſight!—He then advancing to my bed, again lifted the dagger, reeking with the blood of my lovely infant, and plunging it in my breaſt, exclaimed,—"Thus periſh all who oppoſe Delarſonne's intereſt; the laſt of the St. Julians is no more!" I ſtarted and awoke;—and how rejoiced was I to find my dear child ſafe, and ſleeping by my ſide!"

"Ever

"Ever ſince I have revolved this horrid dream in my mind, his dreadful words ſtill vibrate in my ears. The laſt of the St. Julians is no more!—if I have fallen into a temporary ſlumber, ſtill echo thoſe fatal ſounds—The laſt of the St. Julians is no more!—I have ſtrove to baniſh the thought; but it will not be; and the more I think, the greater appears the reality.—I have weighed every thing cautiouſly, and am come to this reſolution,—that I will defeat his hopes, in ſaving the laſt of the St. Julians;—there can be no harm in my daughter's being ſafe—if my dream is only an error of imagination, which I hope to find it, ſhe is mine again;—if, on the contrary, may God protect her!"

"I wept bitterly as ſhe ended theſe prophetic words. She ſeemed ſo urgent, and related every circumſtance ſo minutely, that I could not oppoſe her will.

I begged

I begged to know how she designed to save her daughter from the ill she dreaded.—"This night," she replied, "as soon as the friendly veil of night spreads to conceal your retreat, take my daughter—I resign her to your care—let her be called Adeline;—be you her mother, as you have been the friend of her mother, and have been witness to her sorrows:—In that escruitoire is money and valuable jewels to a very large amount—immediately convey them to your trunks, and let our faithful porter carry them to the inn at Realville, rather than to Montauban, there to await your arrival."

"I did as directed;—I hastily removed the property, and collecting what things of mine were valuable, packed up the trunks, and dispatched the servant with them, without assigning any reason. It was now the grey of twilight:—I hastened to receive my little charge, and to take

take a laſt farewell, as I believed, of my charming, ill-fated friend.—I found her in tears, bathing the cheeks of her daughter, on whom ſhe looked with fondneſs and horror indiſcribably blended. The nurſe quitted the room on my entrance, as ſhe had done when the counteſs related her dream, and propoſed my taking the child.—After indulging her griefs for ſome time, I ventured to interrupt it, and aſked, when it was her pleaſure that I ſhould leave the Chateau?—"Alas! my friend, ſhe replied, do not grudge me the mournful conſolation of taking a laſt farewell! my prophetic heart tells me I ſhall never ſee her more, if ſo, ſhe is your's;—and I think myſelf happy that fate has not deprived me of Sophia de Belmont.—Farewell, my beſt beloved dear, and early friend!—farewell, my darling child!—Heaven only knows what I ſuffer in parting with you both—be aſſured, my

lateſt breath ſhall bleſs you!— Oh, take her, Sophia!—and may the God of the creation guard and protect you both, for ever!"—Nature ſeemed exhauſted by the effort ſhe had made;—ſhe ſunk on her pillow as I received Adeline from her hands!—my heart was too oppreſſed to ſpeak—but my ſobs expreſſed more than I was able to utter.

"As ſoon as I could gain a little compoſure, I haſtened to prepare for my departure, and wrapped Adeline up like a bundle, with ſome of her cloaths, to convey her, unſeen, from the houſe, and juſt as I was ready to leave the Chateau, I turned to take a laſt farewell of my dear Eloize!—Our parting was very affecting!—She once more preſſed her daughter to her boſom—bleſſed her, and returned her to me.—I then took an everlaſting adieu of her in this world;—and, taking Adeline under a long cloak, darted

darted down ſtairs, and through the garden, out at a gate, which led me into the road leading to the inn where my trunks were waiting. It was quite dark when I arrived there. However, a chaiſe was immediately prepared, and I ſet out, with all poſſible ſpeed, for Eſpatiou, unknowing where to go to particularly.—At Eſpatiou I reſted a few hours, and renewed my journey, changing ſeveral times, leſt I ſhould be purſued, and arrived ſafe at Martigny, in the province of Lorraine, where I deſigned to fix my reſidence for a time:—And now, Sir, I muſt inform you, that this very Adeline is the child I received from her mother, the counteſs St. Julian, daughter of the moſt unfortunate parents that ever had a being.

"I immediately took a lodging in a very remote part of the town, and procured a nurſe for my Adeline. I was very ſecret,

and

and gave no account of who or what I was; my money I paid regularly, ſo no one had any buſineſs with my affairs; and I, fortunately, was ſituated in a houſe where the people were not very inquiſitive.

"I paſt a fortnight in great anxiety, it being impoſſible for me to hear any thing of my friend, as *she* knew not where I was gone, nor what road I ſhould take.

"Impatient to know what paſſed at the Chateau Bellevue, and ſuppoſing the counteſs eager to learn what place contained her daughter and me, I determined to ſay, urgent buſineſs required my attendance, for a few days, at a diſtant part of the country. I recommended my Adeline to the nurſe's particular care in my abſence: and, convinced of her affection for the child, I left them with a degree of comfort.

"I immediately ſet out poſt for Realville, where I meant to reſt myſelf before I proceeded to the Chateau, that the domeſtics might not ſuppoſe I had come a long journey.—Judge my aſtoniſhment, when the miſtreſs of the inn, having recollected me, ſpoke as follows:—

"So, Madam,—there has been ſad doings at the Chateau ſince the night you left it, enough to make one's heart ach when one thinks there is ſuch bad people in the world."

"Amazed at what I heard, I entreated an explanation, as having been on buſineſs of conſequence ever ſince the night I left her houſe,—I had not heard a ſyllable of the counteſs or her family, and was now on my return there.

"Then you had much better ſtay away," ſhe replied, "for the counteſs is dead and buried, poor ſoul, and the Chateau,

Chateau, and all the Count's eſtates, gone to quite a diſtant branch of the family."

"I ſhall eſteem it a favour, Madam, if you would oblige me with the particulars of what you have heard," ſaid I,—"for I really feel extremely concerned;" and I ſunk into a ſeat, for my ſpirits received a ſevere ſhock when ſhe named the death of the counteſs St. Julian.

"What I have heard," replied the miſtreſs of the inn, "is a very ſtrange account to be ſure;—but I believe it pretty true, for I was told it by the perſon who nurſed the counteſs.—But this is a world one muſt not ſpeak all one believes. Nurſe told me, that the day after you was miſſing from the Chateau, M. Delarſonne, I think they called him, came, with a number of people, and ſeveral ſoldiers, all armed. He produced a paper, ſaying, it was by authority that they ſhould enter the Chateau and ſpare

none of the family, for the count St. Julian was a traitor. Now, this I thought ſtrange,—for the count, who did good for every body around him, and whom every one loved and reſpected, and in my heart I cannot believe was any ſuch thing as a traitor,—every body ſuppoſes he is dead, for he diſappeared very ſtrangely about three months ago, and has never ſince been heard of:—But, then the poor counteſs—was ſhe a traitor too?—However, thus it was:—The ſervants were all frightened out of their wits, and flew to inform their lady, while M. Delarſonne and his party were deſtroying part of the count's effects. Nurſe ſaid, ſhe was much ſurpriſed to hear her lady ſay,—it is as I expected—let him come."

"He ſoon after entered the chamber, attended by another gentleman; and at firſt pleaded the neceſſity of his appearance, having been expreſsly commanded,

and

and aſked where the child was?—Dead! exclaimed the lady,—my child is dead!—'Tis falſe! he replied,—then turning to the nurſe, he ſaid,—"woman, where is the Counteſs's child?—bring it hither this inſtant,"—"It is dead ſir,"—ſhe faltering ſaid, having heard her lady ſay ſo, and really not knowing any thing about the child; he then ſtruck her a violent blow on the head, which brought her to the ground ſenſeleſs."

"When ſhe recovered, M. Delarſonne had left the room, and ſhe roſe and tremblingly crept to her miſtreſs's bed, as ſhe ſtill heard his voice talking and threatening loudly on the ſtairs,—but how great was her horror to find the Counteſs juſt expiring! ſhe had a dreadful wound on the breaſt, the fright overcame her, and ſhe fainted away.

"She was brought to herſelf by one of the maids, who had fled into her lady's

room for ſhelter, who was as much ſhocked as nurſe: the maid told her that M. Delarſonne inſiſted on the child being found, dead or alive, and that he had emptied every drawer and cheſt he came to, ſuppoſing it was concealed, and not content with that, they had plunged their ſwords into the beds.

"The nurſe and maid, then approached the bed of the Counteſs, whoſe dying eyes, were feebly and dimly raiſed towards heaven—but ſhe had ceaſed to breathe.—In the bed, they found a dagger, and by the nurſe's fall, when M. Delarſonne gave her the blow, ſhe could not tell, whether the Counteſs had killed herſelf, or if any one elſe did it. This made them both very ſorry, but what was to be done, or who was there to oppoſe M. Delarſonne's power, as he ſaid, he came there by authority.

"At

" At length, peace ſeemed to be reſtored, for they ſaw from the window M. Delarſonne, and his party, leave the Chateau; however, they ſoon found, he had left three men to take care of the property, having made a ſeizure of all the effects.

" The day after, the Counteſs was buried, and the nurſe diſcharged, and about three days ago, he came to take poſſeſſion of the Chateau, for being, it ſeems, the heir, he has entreated of the King, as he had no knowledge of his kinſman's guilt, that the eſtates be not confiſcated, and being high in favour, has obtained his requeſt, and is now Count St. Julian:—but take my word for it, if he came diſhoneſtly by theſe eſtates, as nurſe ſeems to think, he will not enjoy them with much comfort."

" During this tale of horror, my tears flowed abundantly, for I could give vent to the feelings of my heart no other way. I raiſed my hands to heaven,—and fer-

vently, though ſilently, bleſſed God, who had mercifully and miraculouſly preſerved Adeline, by giving the Counteſs a foreknowledge of what would happen.—I thanked her for the melancholy narrative; and begged to know if the ſervants ſtill remained with the new maſter:—ſhe ſaid, ſhe did not believe they did, for after the death of their lady, they did not like to ſtay, eſpecially as they knew he was the principal cauſe of it, and it gave them but little hopes of his goodneſs to them, who had treated them all ſo ill, the day their lady died, ſo there now was an entire new ſet of faces at the Chateau, and as for nurſe, ſhe was gone with a lady, to a diſtant part of the country, ſhe knew not where."

"This was all the information I could obtain, and dreadful it was to me.—I waited a ſhort time for a little refreſhment; and regardleſs of the fatigue, returned

turned by a different road to that which I came, leſt the now Count St. Julian, ſhould hear of my being at Realville, and intercept my return. I therefore, continued on to Pont de Rhodes, where I ſtopped the night.—The comforts of ſleep, I could not boaſt of enjoying, for the fatal intelligence I had received, chaſed every expectation of ſlumber from my eyes.

" During this night of inquietude, a thouſand vague ideas fluſhed on my afflicted imagination; I ſometimes flattered myſelf with preſenting Adeline to the King, and imploring him to eſpouſe her cauſe, then again I reflected, and thought that by thus expoſing her, the Count St. Julian, who was the favourite of Louis the XIII. would find means to get a helpleſs infant into his power, and thereby defeat all my flattering hopes of juſtice from the Sovereign. M. de Beauclair, the father of the late Counteſs, died ſoon after

her marriage,—he had a brother, but that brother was a merchant, in one of the Spaniſh ſettlements abroad, and I never heard mention of any other relations:—acquaintances they had many, but I feared to truſt any of them with Adeline's ſecret, and knew how difficult it would be to raiſe a friend, bold enough to diſpute the claim of a helpleſs child, againſt the favourite of a King:—thus, every hope vaniſhed, as had it pleaſed heaven, to have ſpared M. de Beauclair, his being one of the moſt opulent men in Lyons, would have been a powerful advocate for his granddaughter.—Myſelf ſunk to obſcurity, and now, for the preſervation of Adeline, compelled to be more obſcure.—What could I do?—I commended her cauſe to heaven, in whoſe good time, every thing is accompliſhed, praying that ſome friend might be raiſed for my dear girl.

"I deter-

" I determined, at laſt, to conceal her from every one, and not even truſt herſelf with a knowledge when ſhe grew up, of her real birth, leſt any accident ſhould diſcover her to the Count.—I grew tolerably calm and compoſed by morning, and having breakfaſted, returned poſt to Tantonville, from which place, I walked to my lodgings, at Martigny.

CHAP. VII.

I Could ill conceal the grief that lay at my heart, rendered more weighty, by having no one to ſpeak to, of the ſorrows that oppreſſed it. I preſſed my lovely Adeline to my boſom, whoſe infant ſmiles ſeemed to thank me for my fondneſs, nor would I ever after truſt her from me; if the nurſe took her abroad for the air, I always went with her; ſo great was my dread leſt ſhe ſhould fall into St. Julian's hands.—Adeline was every thing to me, though the cauſe of my greateſt uneaſineſs.

"I will paſs over her age of infancy, till ſhe attained her tenth year, during which time, I paid every attention to her education, and at an early age, ſhe excelled in every thing, particularly muſic, in which ſhe

ſhe was an extraordinary proficient for her age.—About which time, a very capital lace ſhop was to be diſpoſed of, in Valenciennes, being myſelf tired of a life of inactivity, and fearing the ſolitary way we lived in, would damp the ſpirits of my dear girl, who ſaw little or no company; and I now wiſhed to lead her into the world, that ſhe might not, by being a ſtranger, be a ſufferer thereby.

"I took the ſhop—removed from Martigny to Valenciennes, and entered into very flouriſhing buſineſs:—the mind being employed, brought more eaſe; and I was ſorry I had not ſooner undertaken ſome kind of occupation, that might have diſpelled the gloom, that for ſeveral years had hung on my mind.

"Adeline grew cheerful, ſhe paid the ſtricteſt attention to buſineſs, and ſoon excelled in making very elegant lace and beautiful embroidery, which however, I never

never requeſted of her, but ſhe did it for her own amuſement and wear.—In the evenings, when I could conveniently leave my ſhop to my ſervants, I took her to public amuſements, and the company of Adeline de Belmont, was every where courted.

" As ſhe grew older I began to relax in my deſign of not truſting her from me; for I found it very difficult to refuſe many ladies who ſolicited her acquaintance, without aſſigning a cauſe.—I was fearful, leſt by repeated refuſals, it might be ſuppoſed I could not ſufficiently rely on my girl's prudence; and I, therefore, truſted to my Adeline's veracity, never to deceive me, but to put an implicit confidence in me;—and made her promiſe to conſult me in every thing, as I had a very particular reaſon for what I ſaid.—" Never, dear mamma," ſaid Adeline, " never will your daughter encourage a thought that you

you may not partake of; and I beg you to have a better opinion of your child, than to ſuſpect her guilty of acting contrary to your will."

"I knew the integrity of my Adeline: I thought it a crime to imagine her capable of concealing any thing from me. She ſometimes viſited her young friends without me; and time inſenſibly paſſed away till ſhe was near ſixteen, when I began to be extremely alarmed for her ſafety.

An elderly gentleman, who had ſeen us one evening at the theatre, followed us home, being ſtruck with the appearance of my Adeline, and ſought many opportunities of ſpeaking to her when ſhe went out *alone*, for ſeveral ſucceeding days.—Adeline at firſt treated it lightly; but finding him become troubleſome, made her complaint to me. There was ſomething very ſingular—that whenever I accompanied her, we could not ſee him—

but

but no ſooner was Adeline alone, than her admirer was following:—Adeline, to break from his unwelcome converſation, refuſed to go out, and kept cloſe in the houſe for above a month, hoping he would be tired of purſuing her.—But, I began to fear for her health as ſhe had been ſo uſed to the air—therefore deſired ſhe would accompany me, and we went to ſpend the evening at a friend's.

"Not ſeeing the gentleman we began to hope he had declined perſecuting her with addreſſes ſhe ſeemed unwilling to liſten to; but in this we were miſtaken, for a few days after, as Adeline was going to church, I being not very well, he again made his appearance, and became rather troubleſome, as he expreſſed the ardent affection he had for her.—She told him, if he had any thing to ſay to her, he muſt go to her mother, for from her alone

for

for ſhould ſhe liſten to the propriety of his addreſſes.

"He ſmiled ſarcaſtically at the reference, and replied, his buſineſs was not with her mother,—and, had the audacity to propoſe a ſettlement if ſhe would conſent to live with him as his miſtreſs.—Adeline's indignant ſpirit was ready to burſt with anger and reſentment; and, looking diſdainfully on the wretch who could have a heart baſe enough to inſult her with ſuch a propoſal, returned an anſwer ſuitable to his deſerts.

"Fortunately, ſhe was near the door of one of my intimate friends:—She knocked, and gained admittance, while the villain muttered a threat—that before long, ſhe ſhould have cauſe to repent it.

"Adeline was ſo overcome with vexation, that any one ſhould dare inſult her ſo ſhamefully, in the public ſtreet, that ſhe declined going to church, and wiſhed to return

return home:—having related the cauſe of her uneaſineſs to my friends, they accompanied her home, *leſt* any accident ſhould happen to her by the way.

"I thought it beſt for her to keep at home, fearful, that if ſhe went out, ſhe might be affronted again, and would have given the world to have known who he was, and where he lived, but the artful wretch had ſo carefully concealed himſelf, that all hopes of diſcovering the offender were fruitleſs.

"In leſs than a week, Adeline being in the ſhop one evening, a man, rather meanly dreſſed, came in to look at ſome lace. Adeline, in ſhewing it, ſaw him place a paper cautiouſly in the box:—he juſt ſaid,—"He feared there was none that would ſuit," and haſtily retired.

Adeline was ſtruck with amazement!—She brought the box to me in the parlour, and related the ſtrangeneſs of the occurrence.

occurrence. I haſtily took the paper, which proved to be a letter addreſſed to Adeline de Belmont:—With eager impatience I broke the ſeal—and, to my utter aſtoniſhment, found it contained the following:

"The writer reſts aſſured, that Adeline de Belmont will pardon the liberty he takes, when ſhe is informed, that this writing is for her intereſt and ſafety."

"He gives you this notice, that he is the agent fixed on to get you abroad tomorrow, on a borrowed pretence,—that a lady of your acquaintance is ill, and wiſhes to ſee you, purpoſely that the gentleman who made you an offer of a *handsome settlement*, may have it in his power to remove you far from this place. The writer undertook the above, apprehenſive, that one might be found with fewer ſcruples; and if you are not acquainted with the name and connections

of

of the gentleman alluded to, —— informs you, that he is married, and has a family, and is the Count St. Julian, a man of immenſe fortune, and high in favour at court.—Make what uſe you can of this intelligence, as the unknown author of this has no other view than for your ſecurity."

"When I came to the name of St. Julian, I cannot deſcribe my emotion!—a deadly ſhivering ſeized me, which alarmed my trembling Adeline!—the paper fell from my hand, and I ſunk ſenſeleſs on the floor, in a fainting fit. My weeping Adeline ſtrove all in her power to aſſuage the anguiſh that preyed on my mind, and, by her tender exertions, recovered me only to a ſenſe of the moſt acute feelings and anxiety for her ſafety.

"I retired to my room.—Adeline attended me;—we fervently thanked Heaven that had favoured us with a knowledge

ledge of the Count's intentions, and could have worſhipped the writer for his goodneſs:—thanks were poor for ſuch a piece of ſervice; but not knowing who was the perſon that had done us the ſignal *ſervice*, was of courſe unable to reward him ſuitable to his deſerts, or the gratitude our hearts felt on the occaſion.

"I then claimed Adeline's attention, and bound her to ſecrecy, begging her to ſummons fortitude to liſten to a tale of horror, and not ſuffer her ſpirits to receive too ſevere a ſhock at what I was going to ſay. With a heavy heart I recounted the fate of thoſe that were dear to her, and every circumſtance which I have related to you, of my fears that the preſent Count was not ſo innocent of their death as he wiſhed to appear, and as every event, both before and ſince their death, ſeemed moſt powerfully to declare.

"My

"My poor girl's heart ſhrunk appalled as I concluded the melancholy narrative of her parents ſufferings; and when ſhe gained a little compoſure from the ſhock her feelings had ſuſtained by the recital, ſhe ſaid,—"Yet, I am ſorry, my dear Madam, to think I have not that claim on your maternal tenderneſs I ever believed; but my gratitude for your care and attention to me, during ſo many years, never can diminiſh; I have always revered you by that name, and no other appellation can ever be known to my heart."

"We now thought it proper to deviſe the means of retreating from Valenciennes with ſafety;—concluding that the Count would not care what means were uſed to get her into his hands, and I feared that as he once procured a warrant to enter her father's Caſtle, as if authorized by power; perhaps might obtain another, to have

have her removed from my houſe, if his preſent plan did not ſucceed, and he found her cautious of going abroad, and as for ſending her from me, that I could not give a moment's thought.

"I reſolved to part with my ſhop, as expeditiouſly as poſſible, and as private, and in the courſe of the following day, (by the agency of a deſerving friend, who I informed of every tranſaction, and my reaſon for wiſhing to part with it; but the ſecret of Adeline's birth, I thought proper to conceal, and of which, they are ſtill ignorant,) I had three offers, and cloſing with that, which ſeemed to be moſt eligible; I let them have the ſtock and furniture, an uncommon bargain, as I could not endanger my beloved girl's ſafety by ſtaying longer for the advance of a little money.

"Packing up all our clothes and valuables, as quick as poſſible, and ſome pictures

tures and ſmall articles I had a regard for; —awaiting the friendly ſhades of night once more to favour my Adeline's retreat. In the courſe of the afternoon, I received the expected invitation for Adeline. I read the letter, and ſeemed perfectly to believe the veracity of it; returned for anſwer, "that my daughter was not at home, being at preſent on a viſit to a lady, and I did not expect her till the morning, or it might be afternoon, next day, when ſhe ſhould certainly attend, as requeſted."

"I was very well pleaſed, that he appeared perfectly ſatisfied with my anſwer, and now only waited till the perſon who had purchaſed my property, came to take poſſeſſion:—they did not keep me long in ſuſpenſe.—Every thing being ready, I begged my friend to put my cheſts into a coach, and convey them to an inn, directing them to be left in a ſtrange name, at an inn, at Cambray, to which place I deſigned

ſigned to retreat for a few days, till I could form my ideas, to what was beſt to be done, as neceſſity compelled me, to remove ſo precipitately from Valenciennes.

"At about nine o'clock in the evening, we left my houſe, where I had for ſix years, enjoyed happineſs and content, where all my cares ſeemed to be forgotten, all my ſorrows lulled to an agreeable ſerenity, and where the daughter of the unfortunate Count St. Julian was happy, and careſſed and reſpected by every body, though her real birth was not known, occaſioned by the machinations of a villain, and voluntarily ſet out, I ſcarce knew where or cared, ſo that I could preſerve my Adeline. We wrapped ourſelves up in long cloaks, which diſguiſed us very much, and going to my friend's houſe, awaited a poſt carriage to come, as I was fearful of going to any Inn, being ſo well known.

"I was grieved at parting with thoſe kind people, whoſe truth and affection I had not a doubt of, and their ſubſequent behaviour fully evinces the goodneſs of their hearts.—They are the only perſons, except yourſelf, who know of our retreat, they now reſide at La Salvetat.

"We ſet out for Cambray, where, receiving my property, and ſtaying two days, we again journeyed, till we reached Buzancy, and ſo on, ſtaying a ſhort time at different places, and changing often, ſo that if the Count purſued us, it would be very difficult to find us.—The journey was pleaſant,—Adeline would have felt more delighted, had not the pleaſure ſhe derived from the excurſion, been checked by fear, leſt we ſhould by any accident meet the Count; and thus we continued along a great ſpace of country, till we came to St. Amans, the ſweetneſs of which place, charmed me, and I fancied I could

remain

remain ſome time there, to reſt from the fatigue of the long journey we had taken, rendered much more ſo, by our changing and going different roads to prevent being traced.

" I felt pleaſed that the foreſt was ſo near, where we could ſometimes enjoy a walk, remote from obſervation, where walking one day, I accidentally diſcovered this receſs, and ſecretly wiſhed to occupy it, if the ſolitary and romantic ſcheme ſuited Adeline, till I could hear the Count was no more, or that he had relinquiſhed the purſuit.

" Whatever this place has been, whether the abode of a hermit, the former haunts of a Banditti, or what elſe, I cannot imagine. I ranged through every part of this ſubterraneous place, and my fears vaniſhed the farther I proceeded. I found ſeveral uſeful apartments, and ſome things that were ſerviceable, ſtill remained,

—it ſeemed totally deſerted, ſo I did not dread any one being offended at my invading their territory, as it ſeemed to have been without an inhabitant, many years.

" I found there were numerous windings and paſſages, that led out to diſtant parts of the foreſt, and are ſo intricate, I fear no intruſion, eſpecially as there are doors placed, that ſecure the entrance of each opening.—I thought I could make it a temporary retreat, till one more deſirable offered, and fancied, that when cleared from the dirt, that apparently had been long there, it might be made comfortable. —So great was Adeline's dread of the Count St. Julian, that ſhe would have been happy to have found a ſhelter, however inferior, ſo that it would ſkreen her from a perſon ſo deteſted.

" I ſoon, at different times, conveyed ſuch furniture and neceſſaries as were moſt

moſt requiſite, and took up our reſidence here, now near two years ago, have ſuffered no interruption ſince our being here, but the arch of one of the paſſages, giving way, through which you fell; hearing your groans, I could not remain an unconcerned liſtener, but gave you every aſſiſtance in my power.

" I have now only to ſay, that as Adeline is deprived of taking the benefit of the air by day, fearful, leſt any accident ſhould throw her into the hands of the Count, ſhe walks out by night, as the foreſt is very unfrequented; ſometimes takes her guittar, and ſometimes ſings, which is, I imagine, the muſic you ſay you heard, and if any one chances to be near, that ſhe is apprehenſive of being diſcovered, the paſſages, as I before mentioned, are ſo numerous, that in every part of the foreſt, they favour her diſappearance, which certainly caſts an air of

myſtery over the place.—You know the reſt."—

Madame de Belmont ceaſed—and Alphonſo, thanking her for the melancholy recital, of which ſome circumſtances had deeply affected him, aſſured her, he had Adeline's intereſt too much at heart, ever to mention the knowledge he had of their concerns, and hoped the time would ſoon arrive, that would call them from a place, where ſo much beauty and elegance ſeemed buried.—"For me," he continued—"I ſhall feel it the greateſt happineſs in life, if you would permit me ſometimes to pay you a viſit;" and he caſt a tender glance on Adeline, whoſe expreſſive countenance did not ſeem averſe to the requeſt,—"Certainly," replied Madame de Belmont, "but I can aſſure you, you will find it very difficult to diſcover us again, when you are once more in the foreſt."—

"I

"I aſſure you, Madam, ſaid Alphonſo, I ſhall make the effort,—but withall extreme caution ſhall ever guide my ſteps."

"Something yet remains," ſaid Madame de Belmont, "that I had nearly forgot;—it is, to explain why you ſaw Adeline at the ſhop at La Salvetat.—She excells in embroidery, and is fond of the employment,—a life of indolence never ſuited her nor me; and as ſhe is obliged to go every week to La Salvetat for proviſions, and other articles which my friend, who reſides there, purchaſes for her, to ſave her from being expoſed if ſhe went herſelf to the market, or various ſhops; ſo alſo, for amuſement, ſhe has undertaken ſome embroidery for a ſhop at that place, and when ſhe goes there takes it with her.—This, Sir, will account for your ſeeing her at the ſhop at La Salvetat; and ſometimes, when we want an extra ſupply, M. and Madame Barré, that is

my friend's name, are ſo kind to procure what I write for, and bring it here. I have a ſmall bed-room, which I keep on purpoſe for their reception, ſo that they can remain here the night; and theſe are the only people I have ſeen ſince I took up my reſidence in the foreſt of St. Amans."

Adeline roſe to prepare ſupper,—and Alphonſo taking the opportunity of her abſence, entreated Madame de Belmont would allow him to pay his addreſſes to Adeline, if *she* had no objection.—He mentioned his family and connections, and wiſhed ſhe would allow him a lawful claim to demand her rights, which had ſo long lain dormant.—Madame de Belmont ſeemed agreeable to the requeſt, and replied,—"If Adeline has no objection, I have none;—leave me to make the inquiry, and when I ſee you next, I may inform you more."

They

They ſupped agreeably together, and next morning Alphonſo took farewell of his kind friends, promiſing to ſee them again in the courſe of a fortnight.—Adeline conducted him along a winding aſcent, and when the day ſhone at the end, Adeline ſtopped and ſaid,—"This avenue is neareſt to the road: I can go no farther, fearful ſome one ſhould accidentally ſee me:—when at the extremity of this paſſage, turn to the right, and be cautious in obſerving two ſingular tall pines are at the entrance. So, Alphonſo, if you ever wiſh to viſit us again, you may know the way."

"Do you wiſh me, Adeline, to come again?—Can I hope that you will remember me?—you would make me very happy if you ſaid you would."

"I do not think," ſaid Adeline, "I ſhall ever forget you,—and do not forget me Alphonſo."

"Heaven knows!" replied Alphonſo, "I never can—the impreſſion you have made on my heart, can never be effaced by time or diſtance, not to mention the gratitude I ſhall for ever feel towards you and dear Madame de Belmont, whoſe generous care reſtored me to life and health.—No Adeline—never—never can Alphonſo forget you," and he preſſed her to his boſom.

"God bleſs you," ſaid Adeline," and may he be juſt to you as you will be to us, with regard to our ſecret, which is in your keeping."—So ſaying, ſhe ſuddenly quitted him, and retreated to the receſs. Alphonſo heſitated a few minutes, and then advanced into the foreſt, paying a minute regard to the tall pines, which Adeline had ſo particularly pointed out to him.

CHAP.

CHAP. VIII.

HE immediately directed his ſteps to his father's houſe, on the border of the foreſt, and was much hurt at being informed his father was at that time there extremely ill.—He ſent a ſervant to acquaint him with his arrival, being fearful that his too ſudden appearance, might add to his diſorder.

The Baron de Semonville, received the welcome news of his ſon's return, with a tranſport beyond what his ſtrength, and the infirmities he laboured under, would permit.—Alphonſo was conducted into his preſence, and the tears of affection and joy, flowed from the eyes of the Baron de Semonville.—He ſeemed revived by the ſight of Alphonſo.—His anxiety to know what had happened, and where he

had been concealed for above a fortnight, was ſoon diſſipated by Alphonſo's relating very minutely, every circumſtance that had occurred during the period of his abſence, only concealing the real name of Adeline, but particularly mentioned every tranſaction of the Count, except his name, which he deemed proper to keep ſecret, even from his father.

The Baron, before the concluſion of Alphonſo's account, ſeemed quite exhauſted, occaſioned perhaps by the joy he felt at his ſon's return, and probably by the attention he paid to a long detail of circumſtances, which Alphonſo believing him better than he really was, and wiſhing to give him every ſatisfaction in his power, reſpecting his long abſence, he alſo might feel a diſappointment to his hopes, in the apparent impoſſibility that Elinor de Montmorenci would never be his ſon's wife, as he had found Adeline de Belmont,

for

for whom he profeſſed the ſtrongeſt affection.—Be the cauſe what it will, certainly the Baron de Semonville's illneſs increaſed, and in about ten days he expired, after wiſhing every happineſs to attend his Alphonſo. His death was ſincerely lamented by his ſon, and all who knew him, and an univerſal ſorrow reigned through all his dependants, who loſt a moſt valuable benefactor, and the poor a friend.

Alphonſo's grief was now extreme, he had loſt the moſt indulgent of parents, the moſt ſincere friend and adviſer,—every thought ſeemed to plunge him into new diſtreſs;—with the moſt filial reſpect, he attended his father's obſequies,—after which, he endeavoured to ſuppreſs unavailing ſorrow, and recollect how he was to act, in obedience to his father's will, and what more immediately depended on himſelf.

He

He firſt paid a viſit to Adeline, and Madame de Belmont; his ſad look and ſable attire, ſpoke his loſs. Adeline wept when ſhe heard a confirmation of their fears; and her tears made a powerful impreſſion on Alphonſo's heart.—After quitting Madame de Belmont, he next wrote to Elinor de Montmorenci and the Count, informing them of his loſs, and that of courſe, his nuptials muſt be prolonged, but in the courſe of a fortnight, it was his intention to ſee them at Paris.

Reſtleſs now was Alphonſo's mind, till he had led Elinor from the error ſhe had long been in, by the wiſh of their parents,—for Alphonſo, in reality, never had a wiſh, that did not centre in Adeline, though at that time unknown.—It was not long before he reached Paris, anxious to relieve an overburthened mind.

The Count de Montmorenci was not at home, but Alphonſo was, as uſual, admit-

ted

ted to the preſence of Elinor, who was in tears, and ſeemed oppreſſed with confuſion, by his ſudden appearance, as it allowed her ſcarce time to remove ſome papers, over which, ſhe had apparently been weeping.

" What can cauſe tears in the bright eyes of Elinor de Montmorenci?" exclaimed Alphonſo, as he advanced to take her hand.—She has no father to lament the loſs of.——But I muſt own, Elinor, my grief ſits heavy at my heart, and therefore, muſt entreat your excuſe for thoſe abſences of mind, I am too confident you will find in me."

Elinor ſtrove to diſpel her tears, but ſtill they would force their way,—unable to ſuppreſs them, ſhe replied, " Alphonſo, although I am happy to ſay, I have not to lament my father's loſs, but ſtill the heart may know a ſorrow as keen,—ſuch an one now embitters mine—I have mourned

mourned for the worthy Baron de Semonville, whom I have from infancy reſpected; I feel his loſs ſeverely, and yet that loſs Alphonſo, allows me a ſhort reprieve, for I muſt confeſs, I did not feel happy in the expectation of ſo ſoon changing my ſituation."

Alphonſo was extremely ſurpriſed at her words, and begged ſhe would explain them:—"I have long wiſhed for an explanation," replied Elinor, "but a ſort of fear, and I muſt confeſs doubt, induced me to be ſilent.—Think me not unkind, Alphonſo, when I declare, that you are the principal cauſe of my diſtreſs."

"Good heaven! me"—exclaimed Alphonſo,—"baniſh that thought charming Elinor, and believe me ſincerely your friend—you know," ſaid he, looking earneſtly on her face,—"ſuch I have ever been from infancy, when thoſe dear revered ſaints, our mothers, fondly ſmiled

at

at the brotherly affection that reigned between us, believe me ſtill your brother and your friend, and think me worthy your confidence;—repoſe the griefs that ſwell your gentle heart in my boſom, and by every power I ſwear, you ſhall find me deſerving the truſt."

"Ah, Alphonſo!—the heart of man is prone to deceive;—true, mine has ever eſteemed you; and I believe you would not wilfully be my enemy; but, if I truſt the troubles of my heart with you—not my ruin alone, but another as dear to me muſt be implicated.—What can I do?—This I muſt frankly acknowledge and truſt to your generoſity.—I never, never, Alphonſo, can be your's;—an inſeparable bar is between us, that no earthly power can remove."

"Tell me," replied Alphonſo, "from whence proceeds this ſudden diſlike?—have

have I been guilty of any fault that has induced you to change your affection?"

"Oh!" haſtily interrupted Elinor, "have a better opinion of yourſelf and me;—it is no ſudden diſlike; what I now feel I felt at the time my father propoſed our union:—at that fatal moment, how I ſhuddered at receiving his poſitive command,—I ſincerely declare, I have ever eſteemed you as my brother,—that eſteem teaches me to believe you would be my friend;—and, if I entruſted you with the ſecret of my troubles, I ſincerely hope and truſt you would not betray me. On you Alphonſo reſts my only hope—my all of happineſs in this world!"—and ſhe turned from Alphonſo to conceal the emotions and diſtreſs that ſwelled her burſting heart.

"If ſo," replied Alphonſo, "inſtruct me how I can make you happy; and witneſs for me heaven! every exertion of mine

ſhall

ſhall be called forth to accompliſh it."—For he ſaw the anguiſh that rent the boſom of Elinor, and wiſhed there exiſted a poſſibility of removing it.

"I am inclined to believe you," ſaid Elinor, "there really is a neceſſity for ſo doing;—you are my laſt reſource."

"Me!" exclaimed Alphonſo.—"You, and you alone.—I received my father's command to look on you as the perſon approved by him for my huſband. I ardently entreat that the delay may proceed from you. The death of the worthy Baron de Semonville, though I ſincerely lament, will furniſh an excuſe for the delay. I will now inform you more, and heaven be juſt to you, as you are to me, in the truſt I repoſe in you.

"It is now two years ſince I became acquainted with a perſon, who, from that hour, engroſſed all my affections. He was a young man, juſt entering into holy

holy orders; but when I firſt ſaw him, he had not taken the clerical habit:—we loved each other with the moſt ardent affection.—Unthinkingly, we overlooked the fatal prohibition that the clergy ſhould not marry; and this young man could not imagine marriage was a greater crime in him than in any other man. To ſhorten my ſtory, I muſt inform you, we were married; and from that period, though bleſt with the ſmiles of an indulgent and tender huſband, I have been unhappy.

"The fatal ſecrecy I was compelled to maintain, leſt my huſband ſhould be a ſufferer thereby, I am not able to deſcribe the horrors of, for you know the rigour of the Roman church, if a member of it dares to marry. My huſband is the unfortunate Henry de Caſtelle, whoſe name you are certainly no ſtranger to, flattered me with hopes, that we ſhould

ſoon

ſoon quit France for another country leſs ſevere, and ſeek ſhelter there, beyond the rigour of thoſe he thought might diſcover our marriage, and thereby become his enemies.

" I muſt return to the commencement of our acquaintance;—to inform you of particulars it is neceſſary you ſhould know.—Henry de Caſtelle was the ſon of a very reſpectable merchant at Sable. He was educated among the Jeſuits at Bourdeaux:—his early talents gained their eſteem, as it convinced them of the ſuperiority of his underſtanding; and ſoon after our marriage, the Biſhop of Bourdeaux beſtowed on him, a benefice of conſiderable emolument; as alſo a prebend in the church of St. Croix.

" This preferment excited the envy, and I may ſay, the malice of his *brethren*. He was a young man—do not think, becauſe he is my huſband, that I ſpeak with

with too much partiality—but every one, that ever ſaw De Caſtelle, obſerved the elegance of his figure, and ſomething great and elevated appeared in all his actions and deportment; every one who knew him, thought him an amiable and accompliſhed young man; he expreſſed himſelf with dignity and eaſe in converſation;—the ſame ſucceſs attended him in the pulpit; and Henry de Caſtelle was univerſally admired as an orator, whoſe force of expreſſion and argument was equalled by few, and excelled by none.

"The ſuperior attractions of de Caſtelle, created a jealouſy among his brethren of the order, who exerted all their efforts to cruſh the growing proſperity that every day ſeemed to crown his every action with ſucceſs; and a plot of the blackeſt nature was framed to aſperſe his character, and leſſen the uncommon eſteem he was ſo generally honoured with.

The

The malignant hatred of a few wretches, which De Caſtelle thought it beneath his notice to pay attention to at that time, but which ſerves to ſhew how neceſſary it is to cruſh malignancy in its birth, leſt, like the Hydra, it grows too ſtrong for our endeavours; and that, however proſperous the ſurrounding proſpect, we ſhould never forget, that a viſit from adverſity may caſt a ſhade over our faireſt hopes.

" In early life, De Caſtelle, and a man of the name of Dampiere, had a diſpute, which though, at that time, amicably ſettled, and, as was believed, all animoſities dropped; yet, ſecretly, Dampier cheriſhed the diſlike he had for De Caſtelle, on whom he found he could not be revenged adequate to his will at that time. Dampiere alſo was a ſtudent at Bourdeaux, and the benefice being given to Caſtelle in preference of him, called forth

forth the ſlumbering vengeance, and was the cauſe of every ſubſequent misfortune, he being the moſt invincible of De Caſtelle's enemies.

" At this period Dampiere was choſen as a director to a convent of nuns, in the town of Laudun, whoſe venerable inſtructor was lately dead. Theſe ladies frequently amuſed themſelves by frightening each other dreſt up to perſonate the ghoſt of their late worthy preceptor. The enemy of De Caſtelle, inſtead of diſproving, encouraged them in this way of pleaſure, and filled their weak minds with ideas of ghoſts, witches, and magic. So powerfully did this kind of amuſement prevail amongſt them, and Dampeire believing it a fit opportunity for wreaking his vengeance on the man he hated, formed the horrid idea of accuſing De Caſtelle of the crime of magic. He therefore pretended that the various apparitions,

paritions, which they ſometimes ſaw, were raiſed by De Caſtelle's power, when in reality they were the minions of Dampiere, dreſſed up for the purpoſe, in order to impoſe on the weak minds of a few ſilly young women, who, he found, were ready to credit any thing marvellous, however abſurd.

" In fine, this circumſtance ſoon got whiſpered through the town, and was in every one's mouth, ſo that De Caſtelle's friends thought it high time to take notice of it; but he, judging from the integrity of his own heart, the impoſſibility of ſuch a charge, and imagining no one could be ſo evil-inclined to form ſuch a horrid accuſation, ſuffered it to paſs by unheeded, as a contrivance too inſignificant to be worth a ſerious thought.

" However, ſome of his friends thought they would go to the convent, as many people, out of curioſity did, to examine

into the truth of the affair; when to their unſpeakable aſtoniſhment, they heard the nuns talking in the moſt extravagant manner, declaring it was De Caſtelle alone, that tormented them by infernal powers.

"De Caſtelle's ſurpriſe, when his friends returned, and related what they had heard and ſeen, is not to be explained, eſpecially as he was aſſured there were many preſent, that ſeemed implicitly to believe the accuſation.

"De Caſtelle confiding in his innocence, treated it with contempt, for he ſaw plainly, that all the buſtle of the nuns, being poſſeſt by dæmons, originated in Dampiere's arts;—however, his innocence was not ſufficient to ſkreen him from the machinations of Dampiere:—he was accuſed of various crimes, while every one had a right to judge according to their opinion. At length, however, by the powerful interpoſition of his friends, which

were

were very numerous, the affair was dropped, and his enemies retreated.—Doubtleſs this ſtrange complication of envy and malice, which has been the general converſation, is familiar to your ears, and needs no further mention.

" I cannot expreſs my uneaſineſs, at the near approach of my marriage with you,—ſituated as I then was, and how happy your abſence to La Salvetat made me. But when I expected your return, my diſtreſs was extreme; the unhappy circumſtance of De Caſtelle's being a clergyman, prohibited his publicly owning our connexion, and I need not tell you how miſerable this additional misfortune makes him.

" But, as if ill fate was never weary of perſecuting her hapleſs victims, Dampiere and his accomplices' deſigns being fruſtrated, by the interpoſition of De Caſtelle's friends, they now formed an accuſation

againſt him, for incontinence, for ſeducing, as they are pleaſed to ſay, a young woman, but ſtrange to tell, no one in particular was fixed on, though it is very certain his elegant perſon and manners had gained him many hearts; and ſince the rumour of this ſtrange buſineſs, many have been to hear and admire him, that did not before, on account of his unmeritted accuſations.

"Still the enemies of De Caſtelle increaſed:—his friend, the Biſhop of Bordeaux, perſuaded him to retire to a diſtant part, as he plainly ſaw how many were determined on his ruin, but his indignant ſpirit, would not permit him to fly, and he flattered himſelf he ſhould be able to defeat their malignant combination.

The Biſhop's propoſal for him to leave Loudun, ſoon, by ſome accident, reached his enemies, who imputed his unwillingneſs

neſs to quit that place, to love.—A freſh accuſation was formed againſt him, and yeſterday he was ſeized, and put in confinement, in the Caſtle of Angers, and this is the cauſe of my tears and anxiety.

" What the iſſue may be, I cannot tell, for Dampiere and his accomplices, which I hear are now greatly increaſed, jealous of his growing power, ſeem determined on his deſtruction :—my ſituation is every way diſtreſſing, as my father muſt ſoon know of my inprudence.—Had De Caſtelle not been an eccleſiaſtic, I could have had the conſolation of ſharing his ſorrows, —partaking his impriſonment, and giving what comfort I was able to his ſufferings : as it is, my appearance would be his utter ruin.—How then can I be happy, Alphonſo, when I hourly expect my father's command to be married to you ?—You know truly the ſtate of my heart, the ſituation of my unhappy De Caſtelle ;—my

own, equally unfortunate, and which I cannot long hope to conceal—O, let the delay proceed from you!"

"I ſhould be happy," replied Alphonſo, "to reſtore peace to your breaſt, on any terms, as alſo to make De Caſtelle happy; at preſent, I aſſure you and the Count, that I ſhould put off, for a few months, the intended alliance, on account of the recent death of my father; and as by the avowal of your marriage, you deprive me of every hope of calling you mine;—ſhall I recede from my attentions?"

"No,"—replied Elinor, "if you will ſo far oblige me to continue your viſits; a few weeks, perhaps days, may clear the character of De Caſtelle, when we will no more truſt the fickle ſmiles of fortune in this country, but will prevail on him to accompany me to another, where free and unmoleſted, we may paſs the remainder

der of our days.—Concealment will then be no longer neceſſary."

Alphonſo was greatly agitated at Elinor's diſtreſſed ſituation, and promiſed her every aſſiſtance in his power,—he paſſed the remainder of the day in a retroſpect of thoſe occurrences, that had been ſo fatal to her peace, and the object of her love.—And when the Count de Montmorenci returned, the evening was ſpent as uſual.

Alphonſo remained at Paris a few days, viſiting the Count and Elinor every day; when, pretending urgent buſineſs required his attention at St. Amans, he took his leave.

He felt a pleaſing ſatisfaction in the releaſe which Elinor had given him, but was exceedingly grieved at her hapleſs ſituation, and much feared all her hopes of happineſs would vaniſh into air. The ſecond accuſation of De Caſtelle and his

impriſonment, was in every bodies mouth, who began to imagine the former charges againſt him were juſt. His enemies now ſeemed to triumph, and malicious fortune apparently deſerted him: yielding him a devoted victim to the moſt abominable arts, and diabolical deſigns, that ever entered the heart of man.

When Alphonſo was at his own home, he had leiſure for reflection, and his mind was divided between the viſits he every day paid Adeline and Madame de Belmont, and Elinor's unhappy cauſe.

He had ſoon the unſpeakable ſatisfaction of finding himſelf truly beloved by his charming Adeline, and made an offer of his hand and fortune as ſoon as the time ſhould expire which he had allotted himſelf to mourn the death of his father.—Happy himſelf, Madame de Belmont happy, and all partaking the ſweet conſolation that virtue and innocence alone

alone can give. The only melancholy thought that would often intrude, was Elinor de Montmorenci. Anxious to learn how her affairs went on, as alſo to keep up appearances with the Count, he repaired to Paris.

CHAP. IX.

BEFORE he arrived at his place of deſtination, he learnt that De Caſtelle was ſtill in priſon. He repaired to the Count de Montmorenci's, but what words ſhall deſcribe his amazement, when he found that Elinor had been miſſing four days, and no one could diſcover what was become of her. A thouſand thoughts ruſhed on his imagination;—had De Caſtelle been at liberty, he would have believed ſhe had ſought a refuge with him in a country, where, free and unmoleſted, they could remain in peace; but now, as that unfortunate man was more ſtrongly guarded than before, having additional accuſations heaped on his devoted head, thought could not trace her that way.

The

The Count de Montmorenci was inconſolable for her loſs; every poſſible means to diſcover her proved ineffectual, and he was overwhelmed with affliction and deſpair.

Alphonſo ſtayed a week at Paris, to offer what conſolation was in his power to the Count, and to aid him in the ſearch made after Elinor, but ſo ſecret had been her retreat, that no one could conjecture what was become of her,—her diſappearance ſeemed a myſtery no one could penetrate, but finding all his endeavours fruitleſs, he bade adieu to the Count, and returned to St. Amans, impatient to ſee Adeline, whoſe ſympathizing heart, he knew would feel for Elinor.

Time flew inſenſibly away, in the company and converſation of thoſe ſo dear to him, the period was nearly arrived that was to unite them for ever, his houſe was getting ready to receive its charming miſ-

treſs, and her amiable mother; they would frequently call to examine and approve the preparations making for their reception:—Alphonſo was happy, except when the recollection of the unfortunate Elinor preſſed on his mind, for although he never wiſhed to marry Elinor, yet the friendly intimacy that had exiſted between them for ſome years, made him very anxious for her ſafety and welfare.

Sitting one morning, loſt in a labarynth of perplexing thoughts, the appearance of Madame de Belmont, wild with deſpair, created in his boſom, the moſt terrifying alarms, and encreaſed the poignency of his former feelings.—"Where is Adeline?—Where is my Adeline?" franticly ſhe exclaimed.—Alphonſo eagerly demanded the cauſe of the alarming inquiry.

"Fate certainly has robbed me of her, ſhe replied, "yeſterday ſhe went to M. de Barré's, at La Salvetat; impatiently I waited

waited her return, as the ſhades of night approached, and each lingering minute appeared an hour to me, whoſe heart was ſeized with unuſual dread,—diſtractedly I have paſſed the night—morning brings new horrors, for Adeline is not returned."

"Direct me to you friends at La Salvetat," Alphonſo eagerly demanded;—"this inſtant I will take horſe, and fly to ſeek her:—O, my burſting heart! my Adeline, my angel, ſhall be reſtored!"—and ſcarcely awaiting her reply, he darted from her, uttering ſtrange and unconnected ſentences, that convinced her of the agitation of his mind, and what he ſuffered,—and he ſet out for La Salvetat, hardly allowing himſelf time to reſpire.

Arriving there, the anſwers he received tended to increaſe his diſtreſs; ſhe had been at M. de Barré's, and was to call again for the neceſſaries they had purchaſed for her, but ſhe had not returned, and

and they felt aſtoniſhingly ſhocked, as they dreaded ſome accident had befallen her.—Frantic with deſpair, he flew to the ſhop, where he firſt had ſeen her—there alſo ſhe had been, and gone.—Her not returning to M. de Barré's, made him naturally ſuppoſe, that whatever accident had happened to her, it muſt be in that town, he therefore determined to make all poſſible inquiries, and deſcribed her very minutely to every perſon he thought capable of giving him any information,—but fruitleſs was every endeavour.

Miſerable, beyond expreſſion, at the repeated diſappointments he met with, he returned home, nearly deprived of reaſon. Madame de Belmont, who had awaited his arrival with extreme anxiety, ſaw his diſtreſs, and dreaded to inquire.—A few minutes declared the fatal truth—ſhe was no where to be found!

How

How ſhall I attempt to deſcribe their feelings?—Madame de Belmont was inconſolable;—Alphonſo, as one diſtracted, pacing the room in agitations impoſſible to imagine.—Hope flattered him, that as Adeline knew his houſe, ſhe might find a means of letting him know what was become of her, as he judged it was an impoſſibility for her to direct any one to the foreſt. Feeling himſelf ſomewhat relieved by the thought, he endeavoured to reaſon with Madame de Belmont, and beſought her not to yield her heart up a prey to deſpair; and while he attempted to conſole her, who was ſinking with accumulated grief and affliction, he wanted conſolation himſelf.

When night advanced, he prevailed on her to let him attend her to the receſs, where he would remain with her all night, as he dreaded her being left alone.—Indifferent to every thing, Madame de Belmont

Belmont accepted his offer, and they returned to the foreſt of St. Amans.

A night of reſtleſs anxiety ſucceeded: the time was ſpent in the bittereſt anguiſh;—unuſually long ſeemed every hour that paſſed;—and every ruſtling ſound that echoed through the avenues of the receſs, flattered them with hopes it might be Adeline.—Vain was every hope! —No Adeline bleſſed their longing and expecting eyes!—Morning brought with it new cares, and encreaſed their wretchedneſs, when Alphonſo prevailed on Madame de Belmont to return to his houſe, and accept a part of it, as the lonely ſituation of the foreſt, without Adeline, muſt be inſupportable;—and it was moſt likely that Adeline might direct to his houſe, or to their friends at La Salvetat, as it was impoſſible to deſcribe the intricate entrances to their dwelling.

Madame

Madame de Belmont liſtened with profound attention to his arguments, and accepted the propoſal of remaining at his houſe, eſpecially as he expreſſed himſelf reſolved to make a diligent ſearch for her through every province. She conſented to ſuperintend his dwelling in his abſence;—but, in caſe Adeline ſhould return to the receſs, they wrote a letter and left it on the table, directing her to fly to them, at the Baron de Semonville's.

No ſooner did they return to his houſe, than calling his favourite, faithful ſervant Euſtace, and collecting, haſtily, a change of neceſſaries, they ſet out on their ſearch, after bidding a friendly adieu to Madame de Belmont, who bleſt them as ſhe ſaw them depart.

They rode about to various places for near three weeks, making diligent inquiries, but without obtaining the moſt trivial information.—He then diſpatched Euſtace

Euſtace to Madame de Belmont, to know if ſhe had received any intelligence, while he continued on to Paris to make inquiries there; as alſo to call on the Count de Montmorenci, to learn if he had heard any thing of Elinor; for, by the myſterious diſappearance of both Elinor and Adeline, it ſeemed as if the ſhaft of misfortune was aimed at him alone;—for, amidſt all the anxiety his heart laboured under, he could not forget the ſad ſituation of Elinor, whoſe diſtreſſes and alarming abſence would often intrude on his mind.—Euſtace was ordered to follow him there.

Additional ſorrow preſſed on the feeling heart of Alphonſo; for no tidings could be heard of Elinor:—Her father had tried every means to acquire a knowledge of her myſterious loſs, but hitherto all efforts were vain.

Alphonſo

Alphonſo alſo heard, when inquiring after the fate of the man, who now drew every one's attention, the miſerable De Caſtelle, that he ſtill remained in priſon. That Cardinal Richelieu, the biſhop of Poictiers, a bigotted monk named Lactanee, and many, very high in power, were among the moſt malignant of his enemies. That no ſooner had the cardinal come to Loudon, than Dampiere, (whoſe views had been defeated in his former cruel intents) conceived the hopes of ruining the object of his hate. He invited his eminence to the convent, declaring the nuns were ſtill poſſeſt, and, that by the powerful magic and villainy of de Caſtelle.—The cardinal, ambitious of his own unlimited ſway, and dreading, leſt the uncommon abilities of de Caſtelle ſhould raiſe a rival in power equal to himſelf, ſecretly rejoiced that there was an opportunity of exerciſing his revenge on

on the elegant, dignified, and amiable de Caſtelle, whom he feared, and whoſe behaviour, in every ſituation, and in every occurrence of his life, had been marked by a moſt unſpotted character, which nothing but ſuch an infernal conſpiracy could have the power of tainting by ſecret accuſations.

The nuns, by Dampiere's command, were ordered into the preſence of the cardinal, and many others equally prejudiced;—and again acted over thoſe horrid convulſions and diſtortions that had been practiſed on former occaſions.—The cardinal put many queſtions to them; but all the anſwer obtained, was—"de Caſtelle!" "who makes you ſuffer thus?" ſaid the cardinal.—"De Caſtelle!" was the reply from all, whoſe name was apparently pronounced unwillingly, and with difficulty and diſtraction. The cardinal then deputed the biſhops to exorciſe them,

and

and phyſicians to examine into their ſtrange-repreſented diſorders; but aſtoniſhing as it may appear, every one fixed on was choſen from de Caſtelle's moſt inveterate enemies; and vain was the interpoſition of friends to a combination that imperceptably encreaſed.

The cardinal reported the ſtate of the convent to the King, who readily credited the report without allowing unprejudiced judges, to examine into the truth of the affair, and ſuffering his ſenſe to give way to the abſurdity of the ſtory, and the villainy of thoſe accuſers, the ſanction of the French government was given to an act of horror, that could not be exceeded by the inquiſition.

Leaving the unfortunate De Caſtelle, to the cruel deſtiny allotted him, I muſt return to Madame de Belmont, who ſeemed marked out as a victim of continual dread and alarms.

Euſtace,

Euſtace, according to his maſter's order, went to Madame de Belmont; but ſhe hearing no news of Adeline, he returned to Paris, on the appointed day; and went, as Alphonſo had ordered, to the Count de Montmorenci.—The Count was much ſurprized that Euſtace had not ſeen his maſter, and rather wondered why Alphonſo ſhould diſappoint him, as he had appointed the preceding day to attend the Count on ſomething very particular.—Euſtace then repaired to his maſter's houſe in Paris, but the ſervants had not ſeen him ſince the day before, and believed he went to the Count de Montmorenci's.

Euſtace returned to the Count's, ſuppoſing ſomething particular had occurred that detained him ſomewhere;—but, as he had appointed Euſtace to be at the Count's at this hour, he ſtaid there, in momentary expectation of his arrival, and waited

waited a conſiderable time; but as he did not come, Euſtace quitted the Count's, and went to his maſter's houſe to await him there.

Two days elapſed and they heard nothing of him.—Euſtace then thought, in all probability, he might have diſcovered Adeline, and returned to St. Amans, with the pleaſing news to Madame de Belmont, or ſome particular buſineſs might have called him there. Unknowing how to act, he took leave of the Count, and on the following day repaired to ſeek his maſter at St. Amans.

It is impoſſible to expreſs Madame de Belmont's ſurprize, for ſhe had not ſeen him ſince the day he departed with Euſtace.

Leaving the unfortunate Madame de Belmont, lamenting the additional loſs of Alphonſo—I will purſue him.

The

The evening he quitted the Count de Montmorenci's, a gentleman accoſted him, and aſked if he was not the Baron de Semonville:—Alphonſo replied in the affirmative,—this gentleman ſeemed very intelligent, he began converſing about his father, and many incidents, which made Alphonſo believe, he had been pretty well acquainted with his family, the evening being remarkably fine, Alphonſo walked ſome way, attending to the gentleman's converſation.

Coming to the corner of a bye-part, he wiſhed Alphonſo a good night, and inſtantly diſappeared.—At that moment Alphonſo was ſeized, and bound hand and foot, and his mouth covered ſo as to prevent him from making any kind of noiſe.—He ſoon found himſelf in a carriage, which drove away with amazing rapidity.

He ſeemed to travel many hours, and when they uncloſed his eyes and mouth to

to take ſome refreſhment, he perceived it was day, and that they were on a large common, remote from any habitation. After partaking of ſome refreſhments, of which he ſtood much in need; they again proceeded to bind his face—all reſiſtance was unneceſſary, for four men of moſt ſtern and moroſe countenances where ſitting in the carriage with him. Submitting to their cruel power, they continued on their journey ſeveral hours longer, night came on, and the carriage ſtopped ſome time, and was relieved by another, into which he was removed, and they then continued their journey through the night, when he found the carriage ſuddenly ſtop, and he was lifted from it, and conveyed he knew not where.

When he was firſt unbound, he found himſelf in a ſpacious hall, ſurrounded by monks, in a black habit, in every part were crucifixes, and pictures taken from

religious ſubjects. He ſcarce believed his eyes, for what had he to do with any thing monaſtic? He certainly thought he had been ſeized by miſtake, and expreſſed himſelf to the ſurrounding fathers accordingly, but the ſcornful and exulting monks ſullenly turned on their heels, and gave no anſwer.

A moſt tormenting day enſued, and at night he was conducted down a ſteep deſcent, and ſecured in a miſerable cell. Here he had ſufficient room for reflection, for he could not form an idea of the cauſe of his ſeizure, nor what buſineſs a body of monks had to detain him.—All hopes of ſearching for Adeline were now at an end, for how was it poſſible for him to free himſelf from the rapacious claws of an abominable fraternity, whom, to his recollection, he never had offended.

What myſterious horrors hung over him, and enveloped all that was dear, and,

all

all that he esteemed! certainly he had an extreme friendship for Elinor de Montmorenci,—and Adeline engrossed every affection,—both were mysteriously torn from the arms of their friends—himself another victim;—thought, in innumerating his afflictions, seemed to lose itself; and a temporary slumber for a few moments robbed him of his miserable sensations.

He was roused from this momentary interval from despair, by the most affecting groans, which the stillness of the night aided to assail his ears more forcibly.—He listened, and thought he could not be deceived.—Another groan, from a different quarter, again broke the aweful stillness of the night; the sound was piteous and distressing, and seemed to issue faintly as from one nearly expiring.—"Can this be real?" said he, "or is it the error of imagination?—Hark!—sure that horrid

ſound could not be fancy."—A violent ſhriek iſſued from a part more near;—it ſeemed to break from the boſom of one in excrutiating pain.

"Can this be the abode of any thing human?" he exclaimed, "or is it deamons, bearing a human form?—to what concentration of horrors has fate aſſigned me!"—He ſtarted—liſtened, and ſtill, at intervals, the moſt melancholy and diſtreſſing groans, mingled with ſighs which ſeemed to proceed from many unfortunate objects, were uttered, which drew his thoughts from his own misfortunes, to attend to the miſery of others; and his griefs were encreaſed by finding the cell ſo ſmall, that he had but juſt room to turn about.

In the morning proviſions were brought him for the day, by two of the fathers, the one, he imagined, was a check on the other.

He

He anxiouſly demanded the reaſon why he was ſecured in that horrid place; but the cruel and inſulting monks, gave no reply to his interrogations, and left him overwhelmed with deſpair, carefully ſecuring the cell, as they departed.

In this manner paſſed four miſerable days, and the nights as the former one. On the fifth day two monks came with torches in their hands, and bade him follow.—He gladly obeyed the ſummons, being ſtill willing to think he was ſeized by miſtake. They conducted him through the moſt terrifying and intricate windings; at length, aſcending a flight of irregular ſteps, he found himſelf in a few minutes in a ſpacious hall, where, in ſolemn ſtate, ſat a perſon, he was informed, was the rector, ſurrounded by a numerous band of black-friars.

With a firm and dauntleſs mind, he ſtepped forward into the preſence of this

demi-god, who put many ſtrange interrogations to him, among which the following:—

"What is your name?"

"Alphonſo de Semonville!"—

"Baron de Semonville;—why omit naming who you are?"

"That is my title," replied Alphonſo.

"Right!"—ſaid the director, exultingly, and in a haughty and imperious tone,—"you would endeavour to perſuade us, we were miſtaken."

"I am ſtill inclined to believe you are miſtaken."

"What are your crimes?"

"None!"

"Here is a wretch!" replied the director with ſcorn:—"has been all his life in the world, amidſt its diſſipation, its luxury, pride, intemperance, and all worldly paſſions;—yet ſays he has no crimes!—immediately confeſs."

"I

"I never was called upon to make a public confeſſion," ſaid Alphonſo,—"nor ſhall I now."

"You will be obliged."

"By what authority?"

"Mine!—hear me and tremble,—mine."

Alphonſo ſurveyed him with ſilent contempt, as a wretch puffed up with pride and arrogance, but without deigning a reply.

"Put him to the torture!—we will obtain a confeſſion!" ſaid the ſtern director,—"no crimes, a wretch!—no crimes!"

"Of what am I accuſed?"—Alphonſo demanded.

"I am not here to anſwer queſtions—it is not allowed for you to aſk any."—was the reply.

"That privilege," ſaid Alphonſo, "I imagined was only before the tribunal of the Inquiſition, or the Baſtille.—I do not

think I am before either, nor can believe any other can put me to the queſtion.—I therefore demand, who is my accuſer, and of what I ſtand accuſed?"

"You are inſolent, and know not what power you ſtand againſt," replied the inquirer, "learn to reſpect my power, and revere my clemency,—mercy ſhall for this time prevail,—lead him back to his cell—by to-morrow he may recollect his crime, and then I expect a clear and unequivocal confeſſion, or he may depend on its being extorted from him."

Alphonſo, with an air of dignity, turned from the arbitrary and inſulting director, and placidly reſigned himſelf to the hands of the monks, who conducted him to the miſerable abode allotted him.

When alone, he ſtrove to recall every circumſtance of his paſt life to ſearch for a cauſe for his myſterious confinement; but he knew not of any offence wherein he

he could be amenable to the laws of his country, much leſs to the monks. A night of extreme anxiety ſucceeded; and before morning he reſigned himſelf up to that being, who alone knows the hearts of men, and truſting to his own innocence and integrity, awaited the arrival of the monks to re-conduct him into the preſence of his ſtern judge.

CHAP. X.

WHEN brought before him, a ſecond time, the ſame interrogations were put, and Alphonſo as reſolutely anſwered them, and demanded who was his accuſer, as he ſtill inſiſted he knew himſelf guilty of no crime that the laws could take cognizance of.

"Put him to the torture!" replied the director; "his crimes will then be known."

"I ſubmit," replied Alphonſo:—"vain is every oppoſition when my enemies appear ſo numerous.—Vain is the aſſertion of an innocent man, when your ears and heart ſeem hardened to the voice of truth and ſincerity!—But there is a merciful and juſt God above, to whom I appeal!—be cautious how you judge, *leſt* that God

God ſhould be as unmerciful to you, as you are now to me."

Alphonſo then delivered himſelf into the hands of the monks, to be led to receive his puniſhment;—but, when about half way along the dreary vaults, a monk haſtily followed, and ordered him to return.

Again brought into the Director's preſence, he ſaid,—"There is but one way of ſaving yourſelf,—'tis this:—immediately enter holy orders;—be one of our brethren, and the doom of torture is cancelled;—it is only ſuſpended till you give your anſwer."

"I never had a thought or a wiſh to enter a monaſtic life; therefore am not prepared with an anſwer—nor is it poſſible for me ſo inſtantaneouſly to determine. I muſt have time to conſider," ſaid Alphonſo.

"In two days I ſhall expect your reply—till then the doom of torture is ſuſpended;—you know the terms—retire."

Alphonſo was again led from his preſence; but was rather ſurpriſed to find the place of his confinement changed; for, after being led down the firſt flight of ſteps, they turned to the left, and paſſed through ſeveral intricate cells and windings till they came to a large, gloomy arched paſſage;—at the extremity was a door that opened into the centre of a large vault, filled with coffins and other relics of death. An iron grating was raiſed, and they deſcended down more mouldering ſteps that led to another vault. This, he was told, was the place allotted him, till he choſe to conſent.—They then retreated, ſecuring the iron grate, and left him to muſe on his hapleſs deſtiny.

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He had no means to view the extent of his priſon, as light was every where ſhut out, but what was admitted through the iron grate, which received its light from the ſmall windows that caſt a feeble gleam into the burying-place.—Anxious to catch a glance, he aſcended to the top of the ſteps, and with eager gaze looked through that cell of horrors!—The damp and noxious vapours of that diſmal place, nearly overcame him, and his heart experienced a terror he had ever before been a ſtranger to.

In about two hours, two other ſtern monks approached through the dreadful gloom, bringing him a ſcanty allowance of proviſions, and a lamp, which they told him, was to laſt till he appeared again before the Director, and left him, ſecuring the grate as before.

Alphonſo felt a gleam of joy at the ſight of the lamp.—He took it, as ſoon as

as they were out of hearing, and examined every part of his wretched habitation, which was a very large vaulted place, and his lamp caſt but a feeble ray on the ſurrounding darkneſs; the receſſes were numerous and deep, and every part ſtrongly ſecured, ſo that all hopes of eſcaping were intirely out of the queſtion; for there was no other entrance to this abode of horrors but by the way of the grate.

As he was examining this cavern of deſpair, in one of the receſſes he diſcovered a ſmall roll of paper, which he eagerly ſeized, as every trifle relieved the agony of his ſoul.—Opening it, to his aſtoniſhment, he read the following lines, which were written with a pencil:

"Whoever enters this abode of miſery, darkneſs and deſpair, never leaves it, but to be led to torture or death; unleſs the Almighty permits the king of terrors to free their mortal part from the hands of

their cruel and relentleſs perſecutors.—Edward de Valmont, has a fatal proof of it, by refuſing to enter their order, was condemned to this place; by ſtill refuſing, was called forth to ſuffer inconceivable torture!—remanded back to bear a few days of lingering anguiſh, till it pleaſed them to give the final blow.—Take warning by Edward de Valmont!—Dampier is mercileſs and cruel; when he ſeems moſt kind, he is more to be feared, and then his vengeance is moſt terrible!"

"Dampiere!—Dampiere!" exclaimed Alphonſo, as he concluded the wretched information the paper contained, "was that ſtern judge, Dampiere, whom the unfortuate Elinor ſpoke of?—Oh, if that arrogant wretch is the ſame, tremble, De Caſtelle, for no mercy, no pity, no humanity inhabits his ſavage breaſt!"—He put the paper in his pocket, and continued wandering about his diſmal priſon.

As

As he returned under the grate, he thought he heard the footſteps of ſome one wandering in the vault above, and ſaw the glimpſe of ſomething move over his head, when, turning his eyes, he perceived a paper fall through the grate, and deſcend to the ground. Alphonſo ſet down his lamp, and darted up the ſteps to ſee who it was, and, to his ſurpriſe, ſaw a monk gliding precipitately through the dark and dreary arches.—He watched him as long as his eyes could gaze, and till his footſteps died away in ſilence; then turning to the ground, on which lay the paper, he haſtily opened, and greedily devoured the contents;—it was addreſſed to him.

"One of the fathers, whoſe heart is not ſo callous to every feeling of humanity as his fellows, ſhocked to ſee you ſuffer without knowing for what, or by whom, takes this method of informing you, you are here

here by order of the Count St. Julian!—Your own heart is the beſt judge if you are guilty of any crime towards him.—The Director is his kinſman, from whom you may expect no mercy:—If you have no particular diſlike to a monaſtic life, accept his offer;—your refuſal will be torture and death!—You are now in that priſon, where no one, that ever once entered, eſcaped!—God bleſs you! and receive your ſoul, if you ſhould ſuffer the puniſhments that will be inflicted on you;—if your heart will permit you, comply—if not, father M—— will remember you in his oriſons."

"Then, death be my choice!" exclaimed Alphonſo, as he concluded the monks epiſtle;—"rather than be compelled to enter a fraternity I never liked, to renounce all I hold dear on earth! let me ſuffer extreme tortures, and the malice of Dampiere's hate.—O God! to thee I call;—

call;—forſake me not in this diſtreſs, but endue my ſoul with fortitude in the trying moment, that ſooner or later muſt come, and, O ſave me!—ſave me!—merciful redeemer, from deſpair!"

As Alphonſo uttered theſe words he daſhed himſelf with violence againſt the wall, at the farther end of his priſon in one of the receſſes where he had withdrawn himſelf to peruſe the ſcroll. As he fell againſt the wall in an agony not to be deſcribed, it, on a ſudden, gave way, and a part was open, nearly large enough for him to preſs his body through.

He gazed on it with aſtoniſhment, exclaiming, "Heaven, for this mercy, be praiſed!—perhaps I may yet eſcape.—O grant the means!" He ſoon removed ſome of the rubbiſh, and ſtepped through the cavity, leaving his lamp leſt it might be miſſed if any one ſhould paſs over the iron grate, and entered a large vault, where

one

one ſingle lamp, faintly glimmered in the ſocket, and caſt a feeble ray through the gloom.

Alphonſo trembled as he advanced;—"who knows," ſaid he, "ſome other wretch, as miſerable as myſelf, ſuffers alſo."—The thought robbed him of his own ſorrows;—he at that moment ſeemed to feel none, but advanced towards the lamp, which ſtood at the front of a cell; on examining, he found the form of a female, to all appearance, newly dead.—Shocked at the piteous ſpectacle, he ſtarted, and exclaimed,—"Is it poſſible there can be ſuch villainy in the world!—how many of our fellow-creatures lay pining with anguiſh, and dying with want and deſpair, while, in our own houſes, we little imagine human nature can be ſo vile to create ſuch ſufferings!—Miſerable! unfortunate!—Here thou art bereft of life, while, in all probability, the hearts of

of thy friends are breaking to know what is become of thee, if I may judge from the manner I was torn from mine."—He paused,—again surveyed the pallid, woe-worn features of the deceased, and uttered a prayer for her soul's repose;—then taking the lamp that stood before her, he proceeded on his way, in hopes to find some means of escape.

Advancing farther on, and turning an angle, a piteous groan assailed his ear, and he stopped to listen whence it proceeded.—It was repeated.—Hark!" said Alphonso,—" another being, wretched as myself, pines in these vaults unpitied, and unknown. I will proceed, 'though I have not the power of escaping, nor of giving relief to the unfortunate;—yet the voice of one who pities our misfortunes, gives a trifling consolation."

He stepped forward, and turning another angle, the feeble light of another lamp

lamp claimed his attention, at the ſame time, a groan of agony echoed through the vault. Alphonſo preſented himſelf before the cell, his heart beating with convulſive emotion; and looking, obſerved another female in a cell juſt ſufficient to hold her in a ſitting attitude.—She claſped her hands together as he approached, and the dreadful ſound of chains rattled through the priſon,—" is it poſſible that thou art Alphonſo?"—exclaimed a voice, which ſeemed familiar to his ears. He raiſed his hand to his forehead, to look more minutely, as ſhe knew his name. But what was his aſtoniſhment, to diſcover in the perſon of the ſufferer, Elinor de Montmorenci, pale, wan, and exhauſted; her emaciated frame could ſcarce ſupport the weight of chains, her cruel oppreſſors had doomed her to wear. The ſight of Alphonſo was too much for her to ſuſtain; ſhe was near fainting, while Alphonſo in unutterable

unutterable anguiſh, raiſed his claſped hands to heaven, exclaiming,—" Gracious God!" how myſterious are thy ways! —do I really find Elinor de Montmorenci ſuffering in this manſion of miſery?"—He immediately exerted his utmoſt abilities to reſtore her, but ſhe was too languid and feeble to be able to ſay any thing particular.

" I am a priſoner, Elinor," ſaid Alphonſo, " like yourſelf, doomed in two days, to ſuffer the torture; by accident, I came into this vault, in hopes to ſeek the means of eſcape, if I ſucceed, you ſhall be the partner of my flight,—I will not deſpair Elinor, I feel revived ſince I have ſeen you."

" Ah! Alphonſo," ſhe replied, caſting her languid eyes on him; what other ſenſations can be felt in theſe abodes of horror, where death and deſpair, reign ſupreme."

" Oh!"

"Oh!" ſaid Alphonſo, "let hope once more be cheriſhed; if I ſucceed, 'tis well; if not, ſtill will I return to you, if only to bid an eternal adieu."

He then left her, and turning the angles, paſſed by the dead victim, that he firſt ſaw,—then looked into his own cell, where his lamp ſtill burnt unmoleſted. He purſued his courſe through gloomy aiſles and miſerable caverns, in which the cells of the wretched victims of monaſtic oppreſſion, preſented themſelves, though he could not perceive they were occupied. In his way he ſtumbled over ſomething, which ſtooping for, proved to be a large iron bolt,—"it may be ſerviceable," ſaid Alphonſo,—"I will not reject any thing," —he then came to a flight of ſteps, which aſcending, he found himſelf in another vault; at the extremity, he came to a ſmall door, in many places decayed, looking through, he perceived it led into a paſſage,

paſſage, at the end of which, light appeared.

With ſmall difficulty, he wrenched the ſtaples that held the bolts, as they were locked down, and the door opened freely into the paſſage.

Elated at his ſucceſs, he left the lamp, and proceeded to the extremity; the aperture that let in the light, proved to be a breach in the wall, that looked into an open field, it was much decayed, and the cement was mouldering away.

He eaſily moved ſome of the ſtones and rubbiſh.—Hope, gave him ſtrength and courage beyond his natural abilities. In about two hours, he had removed ſufficient to allow his body to paſs.

The ſhades of night fell faſt before he left his work, and the ſtars began to deck the ſerene firmament. Falling on his knees, he implored the aſſiſtance of heaven to favour his eſcape, and prayed fervently

vently that no accident might oppoſe it. He felt relieved, his mind reſumed its fortitude, hope once more fluttered in his breaſt, and he looked with rapture on the chaſm in the wall, that ſeemed to promiſe to lead him to liberty and life.

His thoughts now reverted to Elinor, whom he wiſhed to make the partner of his flight:—the greateſt difficulty ſeemed to him, the removal of her chains. Snatching up his bolt, with firmneſs and intrepidity, he darted through the vaults, till he reached the cell of Elinor.

"You are returned!" ſighed Elinor, "Oh! my fears! there is no poſſibility of eſcaping theſe caverns of wretchedneſs: we muſt linger in deſpair, till the icy hand of death, frees us from the oppreſſion of our tyrants."—"Baniſh deſpair," replied Alphonſo, "I am bleſt with the means of flight.—I only returned for you."

Without awaiting a reply, he proceeded to unfix the fetters that bound her hands, but the taſk was too difficult without proper inſtruments—his heart ſickened at the thought of leaving her, and his ſpirits began to give way. At length, he examined the ring in the wall, that ſecured the chain —his bolt was here of ſervice; with a force almoſt ſupernatural he wrenched it from its faſtening, and Elinor was releaſed. But a new difficulty preſented itſelf, for Elinor had continued ſo long in one poſture, ſo long had been deprived of proper nouriſhment and air, that ſhe had not power to ſtep one foot before the other.

Alphonſo lifted her into the centre of the cavern, and being unable to remove the fetters that encircled her wriſts and waiſt, he wound them round her body, and bound her robe between them, to ſtifle their ſound. He then carried her more dead than alive, along the vaults—

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the thoughts of liberty, and the freſhneſs of the air, as they advanced towards the chaſm, was too powerful for her feeble frame to contend with, and ſhe fainted in his arms.

Alphonſo's feelings were now arrived to a pitch of phrenzy.—The proſpect of liberty ſo near,—the impediment ſo diſtreſſing: to increaſe his terror, he fancied he heard a door clap too with violence, and the dread of being purſued, added to his emotions. Fortunately, he now was near the aperture, and he placed Elinor in an attitude, ſo that he could draw her through. He then ſtepped through himſelf, and releaſing Elinor from her ſituation, removed her by the light of the moon, which ſhone with uncommon brilliancy, to a hedge near by, where, exerting every effort for her recovery, he at length ſucceeded.

After ſitting a ſhort time to reſt themſelves, Alphonſo again lifted the trem-

bling and exhauſted Elinor to enable her to ſtep a few paces, but his fears leſt they ſhould be perceived, and Elinor's chains, continuing to chink, induced him to take her once more in his arms;—fear gave new ſtrength, and he conveyed her a conſiderable way towards a town that appeared at a diſtance; then leaving Elinor under a tree by the road ſide, juſt ſkreened by the ſurrounding buſhes, he haſtily proceeded to the town, where, at the firſt inn, he procured a poſt carriage, and to his ſurpriſe, found this town to be Loudun, many miles diſtant from his own dwelling at St. Amans.

The carriage being ready, which was to convey them to Mirebeau, and being in extreme haſte, ſo that he could not ſtop to take refreſhment, but he took with him ſome wine and cakes, that Elinor might partake of.—He ſoon came to the place where he had left her—happy to find her

ſtill

ſtill ſafe—as alſo much revived by the air; he lifted her into the carriage, and it inſtantly drove away.

"How much I am obliged to you," ſaid Elinor: "but for you, Alphonſo, my miſeries would have ended, but with life. I am ſure, I have reaſon to thank you and pray for you, as long as I live, and ſhall ever revere you as my guardian angel.—Bleſſed be providence for our eſcape; deſpair had nearly overcome me, and hope had ſcarce power to reanimate my breaſt, ſo long and painful have been my ſufferings."

"Let us hope," ſaid Alphonſo, "we may be ſo fortunate to reach a place of ſafety, before our flight is diſcovered, for I really dread a purſuit; it is not ſo eaſy to elude the vigilance of theſe monaſtic tyrants, but I will truſt to the Almighty for a continuation of that protection, we have ſo happily experienced."

Elinor now took a little wine, and eat ſparingly of ſome cake he had provided: —her ſpirits became more cheerful, but want of proper nouriſhment, had been familiar to Elinor ſo long, that ſhe was fearful of partaking the offered refreſhment.

CHAP.

CHAP. XI.

THEY proceeded faſt on their journey, and as they drew near the place of their deſtination, new difficulties brought new fears. Elinor was ſtill in chains, nor had Alphonſo the means of releaſing her, every effort he had tried, but in vain.—To appear thus before any one, would make them imagine ſhe was ſome criminal eſcaped, and ſhe might be ſeized accordingly, and all their flattering dreams of ſafety vaniſhed into air.—Or ſhould any one ſuppoſe ſhe had quitted a convent, the dread of offending the clergy had ſuch power on the minds of the people, that it was impoſſible to hope any one would be ſo daring to conceal her, but that inſtant notice would be ſent to every convent round.

Unable to determine how to act, the carriage, before they were aware of it, ſtopped at the door of the inn, and Elinor, overcome with terror for her own and Alphonſo's ſafety, was lifted almoſt ſenſeleſs from the carriage, and conveyed into a room, which was opened for their reception.

The hour of midnight had ſtruck, and the houſe was being ſhut up,—but hearing the ſound of chains, ſeveral of the people of the inn, ran into the room to ſee what was the matter—the maſter of the houſe among them.

Alphonſo was hurt at their obſervations, but conſcious innocence gave him courage, and he thought it beſt to declare the truth, leſt they might conjecture wrongfully.—"You ſee before you," ſaid Alphonſo, "a wretched victim of monaſtic cruelty,—by miracle I have releaſed her, and hope to reſtore her to the arms of her

her father, from whom ſhe has been torn now three months, and confined in a dungeon of horrors, deprived of light, and dying for want.—It is Elinor de Montmorenci, whoſe myſterious loſs, no doubt, you are acquainted with, as the numberleſs advertiſements and rewards offered by the Count, her father, to any perſon that would diſcover her, muſt be freſh to your memory."

Elinor began to revive;—every one preſent ſeemed to pity her;—and all acknowledged they had heard of her loſs, and the large rewards Alphonſo had ſpoken of.

Proper inſtruments were then brought in, and Elinor was ſoon freed from the burthen of her fetters;—every one looked on her with ſurpriſe, and ſeemed aſſiduous to give her every aſſiſtance her miſerable ſituation required.

Alphonſo then requeſted ſhe would retire to reſt a few hours, as ſhe ſtood in great

need of ſuch refreſhment, and ordered a carriage to be ready at a very early hour. Alphonſo ſaw her ſafe to her chamber, and then returned, reſolved to ſit up the remainder of the night, leſt any accident ſhould diſcover the road they had taken; and, if purſued, he determined to ſell his life dearly rather than fall into the hands of the monks again.—His dread was principally in the poſt-boy; and Alphonſo was happy when he found the lad did not mean to return till morning, and ſoon after ſaw him retire to go to bed. The houſe was cloſed for the night, and the landlord, rather anxious to know a little more particularly, ſat talking the remainder of the night with Alphonſo.

He ſeemed much affected with Alphonſo's narrative;—his countenance could ill conceal the grief that apparently laboured at his heart!—At length, he ſaid,—"Sir, I have reaſon to wiſh the whole

whole body of monks extirminated from the face of the earth;—they have made me miſerable; and though the time has now been paſt ſome years, yet I feel, many a time, an aching heart.—By their abominable arts I loſt my only daughter, who was a very great comfort to me; poor girl!—Her mind moſt powerfully gave way to what they dictated, being, I may ſay, too rigidly religious. One day, I miſſed my daughter, and wondered at her exceeding the hour ſhe propoſed being at home.—A gentleman had been at my houſe a day or two,—him I miſſed alſo, neither returned all night, and my trouble I need not deſcribe.

"I did the gentleman much wrong in my heart; for I really fancied he had deluded the girl away;—and when he returned in the morning, I was very much enraged, and charged him with taking my daughter away, as ſhe had not returned all night!

"He was much ſurpriſed, and ſeemed greatly affected at ſomething, which apparently cauſed him great uneaſineſs;—at length, he ſaid,—"Sir, I have ſomething that troubles me extremely, and your charge affects me much.—I really know nothing of your daughter; and when I have informed you where I have paſſed the night, and what I have ſeen, I hope you will be ſatisfied."—He then proceeded—

"I went from here to the church belonging to the monaſtery of the Franciſcans, and went into a confeſſional, being deſirous to confeſs; I fell aſleep, and by that means was ſhut into the church.—I waked about midnight, ſurpriſed to find myſelf there, but ſoon recollected where I was, and reconciled myſelf to ſtay till the church was open in the morning for ſervice.

"A ſudden gleam of light darted through the aiſles, which made me anxious

anxious to ſee what it was, and looking through one of the holes of the box, I ſaw a monk, very much muffled up, carrying a large torch :—he advanced up the aiſle till he came near the altar,—there he ſtooped down, and drew away a large ſtone, then retired a ſhort diſtance, holding his torch up, and ſeemed in great expectation.

" The ſight alarmed me !—I ſat ſilent as death, leſt I ſhould be heard. In a few moments two monks advanced up the aiſle, leading a woman much wrapped up, with a bandage over her eyes ;—they led her over this hole, and ſhe inſtantly dropped through and diſappeared, without having an idea, I imagine, where they were going to conduct her, or that ſhe was leading to certain death ; for ſuch, I verily believe, was her fate.—They then replaced the ſtone, and the three monks walked away together.

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"I was too much alarmed for my own ſafety to ſpeak; for I thoughtt they would put me to death with as little remorſe, as they, to all appearance, had the woman, if they diſcovered any one there who had ſeen their actions, to prevent being expoſed; ſo I ſat ſtill till morning, and when the ſervice was ended, I mixed with the crowd, and walked hither.—This is what makes me uneaſy, and I therefore requeſt you will ſend for a magiſtrate, that I may make teſtimony thereof."

"The magiſtrate attended; but you will, perhaps, think it ſtrange, that they ſeem unwilling to hear of the monks evil deeds, and are fearful of accuſing theſe wretches; wherefore many go unpuniſhed, whoſe guilt merits every ſeverity, and which they ſo laviſhly beſtow on others. The gentleman's depoſition was taken down, and the monks were to be examined.

examined.—I went with him in the afternoon, when all the monks were aſſembled.—The gentleman pointed to the ſtone, which he declared, upon oath, he had ſeen removed.—The magiſtrate ordered it to be removed,—when, O! dreadful ſight;—the firſt object that preſented itſelf, was my daughter dead in a pit beneath! amidſt many other females, alſo dead!—but none ſeemed to have ſuffered ſo recently as my poor girl.—The whole place was in a conſternation;—the gentleman endeavoured to recollect the figures of the monks, but was unable to fix on the guilty ones, as they were ſo wrapped up when he ſaw them the night before, that he could not aſcertain them.

"My poor girl was lifted from the pit, and, O! ſhocking thought! was found to be with child!—Now, as ſhe confeſſed to only two particular monks, with whoſe names

names I was perfectly unacquainted, I imagined them to be the seducers of my unhappy, misguided girl!—and, fearful of their crime being known endeavoured to conceal it by her death!—but as there was no proof by whom this horrid deed was done, they threatened me with every ill if I ever dare mention the affair, or cast a stigma on their order, which induced me, soon after, to move from Casaubon to this place. The gentleman who made the discovery was obliged to fly, dreading they would wreak their vengeance on him;—and I could receive no redress as they keep the people in so much awe that every one dreads to offend them;—and whatever they are pleased to say, must be implicitly believed."

Alphonso was shocked at this tale of horror, and declared, he thought there was less religion in those houses of devotion, than in the world at large;—every thing

thing he had been witneſs to there convinced him his ideas were juſt.

By the time the landlord had finiſhed the recital of the melancholy fate of his daughter, they were informed the chaiſe was getting ready,—breakfaſt was ſerved in, and Elinor made her appearance refreſhed by a ſhort repoſe, and comfortable from the aſſiſtance of water, of which ſhe had not known the uſe of ſome weeks. When ready to leave the inn, Alphonſo intreated, that, in caſe they ſhould be purſued, the landlord would be ſo kind to ſay, he knew not what road they had taken,—a requeſt almoſt unneceſſary, for he ſeemed to feel much for Elinor, and heartily wiſhed them ſafe beyond the reach of their enemies.—Alphonſo carefully packed up the chains in which he found Elinor, to convey them to the Count de Montmorenci.

CHAP.

CHAP. XII.

ONCE more ſeated, and purſuing their journey, Elinor made ſome inquiries concerning her huſband, as, during her confinement at the convent, it was impoſſible for her to know any thing.—Alphonſo informed her of all he knew prior to his ſeizure; but that, ſo powerful were his accuſers, it was much to be feared he would ſuffer thereby, for he had heard he was removed from the caſtle of Angers, to a priſon in Loudun.—Elinor replied, "ſhe had taught her heart to expect the worſt, and hoped heaven would endue her with fortitude to bear with reſignation every ill that might happen."—Various converſations of De Caſtelle's affairs took up the time till they arrived at the

the inn, where they were to change carriages.

Eager to reach home, Alphonſo ſtaid but while the horſes were putting to;—partaking of a ſlight repaſt, they again ſeated themſelves and drove off.

They travelled very faſt, and reached Uzerches late that night, where they ſlept: Elinor enjoyed a comfortable repoſe; the fatigue of the day threw her into a profound ſleep, which laſted till the ſervant went to inform her, the gentleman was juſt going to breakfaſt.

Elinor did not keep Alphonſo long waiting, and he was pleaſed to ſee her look refreſhed by her night's reſt.—They then recommenced their journey, and continued till about four o'clock in the afternoon, when Alphonſo found they were about two miles diſtant from his own habitation, and they quitted the carriage, from whence, he thought it moſt prudent

prudent to walk, as he wiſhed every trace of them might be loſt there.

Directing his courſe towards the foreſt, that they might avoid the road, as the habit and appearance of both were ſufficient to create aſtoniſhment in the eye of every obſerver. Elinor being a little recovered by air and proper refreſhments, and a brilliant ray of hope darting into her ſoul, made her ſtep forward, with a cheerfulneſs he could ſcarce expect from the languid and relaxed ſtate ſhe was in: And Alphonſo's heart, as he drew nearer his dwelling, beat with eager emotion in the expectation that Adeline was there, or that Madame de Belmont had received intelligence from her. For the firſt time he mentioned her, and her unfortunate ſituation, and alarming diſappearance, to Elinor, who kindly participated in his anxiety for her ſake.

While

While converſing, a viſta of the foreſt breaking on their ſight, Alphonſo's villa appeared:—joyful was the proſpect, and they put forth a prayer that no accident might interfere to hinder their ſafe arrival.

Madame de Belmont perceived their approach, and darted forth to meet them, ſuppoſing it to be Adeline, and ſeemed hurt at the diſappointment;—while Alphonſo eagerly inquired for her, but to his unſpeakable grief, he learnt ſhe had not been heard of.

He entered his houſe, but his heart ſickened, for there was no Adeline to receive him. Madame de Belmont was much hurt at his appearance—he retired to change his dreſs, and requeſted Madame de Belmont would favour Elinor de Montmorenci, (of whoſe myſterious loſs, ſhe had heard Alphonſo ſpeak, prior to Adeline's being torn from them,) with a change

change of apparel. Madame de Belmont's anxiety, to know what had happened to him, was much encreaſed, but he did not keep her long in ſuſpenſe.

Alphonſo ſoon returned to her, his mind being filled with apprehenſions for his ſafety; and judged, that as the monks knew his name, it was alſo very likely they ſhould ſeek his abode, when they came to miſs him; and therefore, trace him to St. Amans. This idea made him think it unſafe to continue at his own dwelling. He haſtily ran over his conjectures to Madame de Belmont, and convinced of the neceſſity of his removal, thought that the cave in the foreſt would allow him a ſafe retreat, till the malice of his enemies was ſubſided.

The hurry he had been in, and his exertions to attain liberty for himſelf and Elinor, had made him forget the papers found in his priſon—but now he had leiſure

ſure to think, and could not conceive what he had ever done to the Count St. Julian, to make him his enemy. Madame de Belmont was aſtoniſhed at the name, but as he had no time to loſe, he begged ſhe would attend him and Elinor to the cave, where he would give her an exact account of his ſufferings, as he deſigned to conceal Elinor there, till the Count de Montmorenci ſhould be made acquainted with his daughter's ſafety.

Elinor appeared, and looked quite an altered being to what ſhe was.—They all repaired to the receſs.—Madame de Belmont could not refrain tears as ſhe entered, remembering her Adeline, and Alphonſo felt the moſt poignant anguiſh, when he recollected how many happy hours he had paſſed with her there.

Having ſeated themſelves, Alphonſo gave a full account of his ſeizure, and every circumſtance that had occurred ſince he

he departed from his own houſe, in ſearch of Adeline :—of his miraculous diſcovery of Elinor, and their happy eſcape. Madame de Belmont was aſtoniſhed.—With lifted hands, ſhe bleſſed the Almighty for his ſafety and return; and was charmed to think the receſs was ſtill ready to afford him ſhelter, as ſhe judged it dangerous to remain at his own houſe. Elinor's aſtoniſhment was equal to Madame de Belmont's, for the hurry they had been in, and the dread of purſuit, had taken from them; all thoughts of talking of what they had ſuffered.

Alphonſo and Madame de Belmont, were now anxious to know how Elinor came to be detained,—who immediately informed them.

CHAP.

CHAP. XIII.

"I Was," ſaid ſhe, "walking with ſome ladies of my acquaintance one evening, when a woman accoſted me, and entreated to ſpeak to me:—I ſtepped aſide, and ſhe begged I would not be alarmed, but that my father deſired I would come to him immediately, as he was taken very ill, at a houſe, about half a mile from Paris, and that he had ſent the gentleman's coach, where he was, to fetch me, that I might be there the ſooner.

"Alarmed, to the greateſt degree, for my father's ſafety, who I knew was troubled with fits, I ſcrupled not to follow, and entered the carriage with the woman.—A man was ſitting there, who ſpoke not a ſyllable, but ſat ſullen. I began to be ſurpriſed,—but not knowing but the car-

riage might have been ſent for ſome one elſe, I endeavoured to ſuppreſs my fears, which ſeemed to diſſipate, as the carriage ſtopped at a houſe, about the diſtance the woman had informed me.

"The coach door was opened, and ſhe ſtepped out.—I was preparing to follow, when the man took hold of my robe, and ſaid,—"ſtop madam."

"For what ſir?"—

"The Count is not apprized of your arrival; your ſudden entrance may increaſe his diſorder."

"While he was ſpeaking, three men ruſhed out of the houſe, and jumped into the carriage, making me ſit down.—"I am going to my father, gentlemen," ſaid I,—"I beg you let me paſs."

"Your father is at Paris," replied one of them, in a terrifying tone of voice, "and you are our priſoner."—Priſoner!" I exclaimed,—"I know of no offence that

that any one can dare to accuſe me of—I inſiſt on getting out of the coach."

"Sit ſtill," replied the wretch,—"or you will be forced, and if you dare to breath an accent of alarm, your life ſhall anſwer it."

"Terrified to death at a ſound ſo full of horror, I was ſilent; but, at times, continued to implore their mercy, but neither tears, prayers, or threats, were of any avail. We drove on rapidly for many hours, and reſted under a woody part to take refreſhment. We had not ſtayed long, before another carriage came up, and we moved into it.—I caſt my eyes around, as they lifted me from it, but ſaw no means of eſcape, and day was juſt breaking.—We then continued on our journey till ſun-ſet, when another change awaited us on a common, remote, to all appearance, from any habitation.

"We purſued our journey, and at length ſtopped at the portal of a convent, ſoon after the matin bell had rung, which we heard at a diſtance, and the impreſſion the external of that place made on my mind, can never be eraſed.

"I was ſhewn into a large room, there to wait till matins were finiſhed.—I then was conducted into the preſence of the ſuperior, who was ſitting to receive me. Her manner was haughty in the extreme, with a ſupercilious ſmile and accent, ſhe ſaid,—"Elinor de Montmorenci is arrived at laſt,—you have given a deal of trouble."

"I never knew that my preſence here was neceſſary," I replied, "nor can I think it is now."

"Your thoughts are very free, but you have no right to exerciſe them," ſaid ſhe, riſing from her chair, with an air of dignity, and walked away, followed by a retinue

tinue of nuns, leaving me to the care of four elderly nuns, who ſoon led me to the cell deſigned for me.

" I had no reaſon to complain of their rigour for a few days—but abhorred the idea of being in a convent. The firſt time the Abbeſs deigned to take notice of me, was about four days after, as we returned from Chapel, when ſhe ſaid, " I ſhall aſk our Director's opinion, for I do not think it proper, that one who deals with ſorcerers, that are guilty of abominable crimes, ſhould be permitted to profane our altar."

" I could not imagine this diſcourſe was directed to me; however, in the end, it proved ſo, for ſhe commanded me into her preſence; but, as I approached, ſhe ſaid,—" Satan keep thy diſtance,—it is not in my power to call thee by a name vile enough;—confeſs that thou aſſociates with magicians dæmons, and thoſe who profane the ſacred rites of our religion."

Aſtoniſhed that ſhe ſhould addreſs herſelf to me, in ſo ſtrange a manner, I at length replied,—" I know no one guilty of the crimes you mention,—the integrity and innocence of my own heart, can bear teſtimony to a conduct irreproachable."

" You have liſtened to ſtories of love from one of the church, which is prohibited you know."

" Me!"—

" You have been known to pity, what you call his misfortunes, and hoped he might obtain pardon.—Doth not your conſcience accuſe you of crimes like theſe?"—

" I was ſilent,—for a ſudden idea fluſhed on my mind, that ſhe alluded to De Caſtelle, but imagining it an utter impoſſibility, for any one to have the ſmalleſt conception of my having any knowledge of him.—Again ſhe ſpoke, and demanded a reply.—I anſwered—

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" The ſtrange crimes you are pleaſed to accuſe me of, I muſt confeſs, aſtoniſhes me, and I cannot believe you have any right to put ſuch queſtions to me.—I know of no creature on earth who is a ſorcerer, or deals with dæmons.—I revere our ſacred religion, and really think you have been misinformed. Let the perſon who accuſes me appear, that I may know to whom I am indebted for theſe malicious aſperſions."

" The audacious wretch!" exclaimed the Abbeſs;—" How hardened in guilt and wickedneſs, but do not expect, by anſwering thus evaſively, that your crimes will go unpuniſhed."

" As ſhe finiſhed ſpeaking, the Director made his appearance; to whom ſhe very minutely related the arrogance of my behaviour.—He was pleaſed to put many interrogations to me; ſometimes declaring my anſwers were evaſive, and ſometimes

ſeeming inclined to believe me; but not finding me confeſs my criminality, he ordered me to cloſe confinement, till I choſe to make a clear and candid confeſſion.

"For ſeveral ſucceeding days, I was brought into their preſence to undergo examinations, and reply to charges which my feelings were ſhocked to liſten to. All which tended to convince me that it was their intention to extort from me, various charges againſt De Caſtelle, and to force me to be an inſtrument of accuſation, and a powerful witneſs againſt that unfortunate man, whenever occaſion offered to exerciſe their malice.

"Good God! what were my ſenſations at that cruel period, beſat with enemies; innocence itſelf could not ſupport the ſhock of being thus accuſed.—I acknowledged that if the perſon alluded to was De Caſtelle, I had ſaid, I was ſorry for him, and hoped he might obtain pardon,

nor

nor could I charge my conſcience with a crime in ſo wiſhing."

"And why was you ſorry?" ſternly interrogated the director.

"Becauſe the ſtory of his troubles was ſpoken of, by who either viſited my father's, or in whatever company I happened to viſit;—if you have any knowledge of what paſſes beyond theſe walls, you muſt know, that M. de Caſtelle's cauſe is the general topic of converſation."

"And what other cauſe?"

"I had been always taught to revere the man whoſe preaching was approved by every perſon who had ever heard him;—and, while at church, have paid attention to the reaſonable and religious diſcourſe he uttered there.—If this ſhould be a crime, how many hundreds are as guilty?"

"And his gallantries, no doubt, were agreeable to you?"

"I never heard any one aſperſe his character in this manner,—or, if I had, what was it to me!"

"Wretch!" he exclaimed, "inſtantly confeſs your knowledge of his having made love to various females, yourſelf among the number, or the moſt unheard-of tortures ſhall wring it from you!"

"This threat, which I had not a doubt but they would put in execution, ſtruck chillingly to my heart!—I turned pale,—I trembled with agony; nor had I power to articulate one ſyllable; but, ſinking with terror, leaned for ſupport againſt a column, till the ſtern command of the director, (who proved to be that abominable and cruel Dampiere, the inveterate emeny of De Caſtelle) awakened every dormant feeling of my ſoul!—He judged me guilty, and condemned me to ſuffer innumerable

merable hardſhips!—no ſooner was his harſh decree promulgated, than the nuns offered me every indignity and inſult, calling me by every horrid name that malice could invent.

" I was led to a miſerable cell under ground, where I paſſed a night of intellectual torture,—for my reaſon was almoſt overturned by the cruel calamities I had undergone, and ſtill expected to experience.—When morning came, I was led from my cell, and conducted to do the moſt ſervile employments. At this I did not repine; but ſeeing me ſeem contented, they thought proper to change my penance, and want of food was their next proceeding, in hopes to extort a criminal confeſſion againſt an unhappy man.

" I bore this with reſignation, till nature, nearly exhauſted, hoped for the friendly hand of death to end my miſeries!—as life, deprived of liberty, and devoted to

theſe wretches, was diveſted of every charm!

"I was taken from the jaws of death, and allowed nouriſhment, till I was enabled to be put to ſeverer trials, and a puniſhment of blows was every two or three days inflicted.—Still I obſtinately perſiſted in ſilence; nor could all their efforts extort a word from me that could criminate De Caſtelle.

"Not ſucceeding this way, I was loaded with chains, and condemned to a cell in one of the vaults, where it would only admit me, in a ſitting poſture! for they deemed ſuch a wretch as me unworthy the pleaſure of repoſing my limbs!—I was conſigned to this tomb of wretchedneſs, and literally buried alive!—condemned to linger out a life of miſery, ſurrounded by groans and penetential ſighs which broke from the boſoms of thoſe unfortunate mortals, who, like me, were

were doomed to linger out a life of deſpair and wretchedneſs; and ſo cautious were our mercileſs perſecutors, leſt any one ſhould have the comfort of ſpeaking to a fellow-ſufferer, that the cells were at ſuch a diſtance, as only their groans and melancholy moanings could be heard!

My proviſion of coarſe bread and water was brought every week:—a ſmall lamp, which caſt a feeble ray, and ſerved to ſhew the horrors of the place more diſmally, and a crucifix, were my only allowance!—Three weeks of anguiſh rolled away in this ſolitary manner, and my thoughts, during that period, I cannot deſcribe!—I grieved till my tears were exhauſted!—the fountain of my eyes ſeemed dry, and I could weep no more!—At the beginning of my confinement my ſorrows flowed for my father, whom, I knew, muſt ſuffer ſeverely for my loſs! Then I lamented the fate of the wretched

De

De Caſtelle, whoſe ruin ſeemed inevitable as his enemies exerted all their influence to criminate him, which I plainly ſaw, by my ſeizure, that they meant to extort confeſſions againſt him, from whoever fell in their way.—My own ſituation grew every day more diſtreſſing, as I had before mentioned to you; and I anticipated that day with horror, that would bring an addition to the family of Montmorenci, under circumſtances ſo very dreadful!

"After I had been confined in the vaults for above three weeks, I was rather ſurpriſed to ſee the abbeſs approach, attended by four nuns, bearing torches; and with pleaſure I liſtened to the ſound of a human voice; for, during my impriſonment, though I had ſpoken to the nuns who brought my ſcanty allowance, yet I never received a reply.

"The abbeſs looſened my chain from the ring that ſecured it, and I was led totter-

ing

ing through the vaults, my limbs being enfeebled by long diſuſe, and bending with the weight of chains that emmanicled my hands and body.—Thus, I was conducted into the hall,—but for what, I neither knew nor had a wiſh,—ſo intirely careleſs was I with regard to any thing that might befall me.

"The abbeſs proceeded firſt;—I was led in by two nuns, and the other two followed;—but, as I entered the door, the aſtoniſhment I felt at ſeeing Cardinal Richelieu, ſeated in the grand chair, raiſed a few ſteps from the pavement, was extreme.—Dampiere, the cruel Dampiere! was ſtanding on his right hand,—and a friar, who was called Father Lactance, on the left:—a number of nuns ſtood near, looking with awe. He ſeemed in expectation of me; for, as I entered, his eyes were fixed in a haughty and imperious manner as I approached;—but the ſudden ſight

ſtruck

ſtruck me ſo as I am unable to deſcribe: an involuntary ſtart made me incapable of proceeding.

"The abbeſs pointed to me,—and the cardinal commanded me to advance.—Hope fondly flattered my unfortunate boſom, that I ſhould find a friend in the cardinal to eſpouſe my cauſe;—for, formerly, my father had done a ſignal ſervice for his eminence, who had paſſed it by neglected;—but now I ſincerely wiſhed my appearance, in ſuch diſtreſſing circumſtances, might call thoſe recollections, and that he would now enjoy the ſupreme happineſs of returning the obligation, by reſtoring the daughter to the arms of her unhappy parent.

"How erroneous were all my expectations. I ſtepped forward with an effort beyond my ſtrength, buoyed up by the flatterer—Hope; and throwing myſelf at the feet of his eminence, with lifted hands,

hands, and ſtreaming eyes, implored him to pity and releaſe me from the cruel tyranny that had been exerciſed over me for ſeveral weeks.

"The cardinal ſmiled, and ſaid,—"You ſpeak of tyranny!—I know the whole of your ſtory, your guilt, every action of your life is known to me.—I muſt acknowledge, my opinion is, you have been treated with too much lenity for the crimes you have been capable of committing."

"I know of no crimes," ſaid I, "that can poſſibly deſerve the unmerited puniſhments I have received!"

"And who gave you a right to judge of them?"

"The conſciouſneſs of my own heart, that has ever acted with innocence, truth, and ſincerity.—My moſt inveterate enemies muſt acknowledge it, if they would really ſpeak the truth;"—and I roſe from the feet of the inſulting cardinal.

"Your

"Your accomplice," returned his eminence, "has confeſſed your guilt;—tortures have forced it from his boſom, and you are now doubly accuſed."

"Heaven knows!—I have no accomplice;—the very name fills me with amazement!"

"The cardinal then mentioned the name of De Caſtelle;—my heart was chilled with horror!—He ſaid,—"Tortures had wrung the accuſation from his boſom!"—I knew not what the villainy of his oppreſſors had made him avow;—but I could not believe his noble heart would ever breathe a ſigh, however extorted, that ſhould lead me to ſuffer one moment's pain.

"He has acknowledged," continued his eminence, in a loud and imperious tone, "your ſeducing arts;—that you firſt drew him from his duty in the church of St. Croix, by your fatal wiles!—that

for

for your ſake, it is believed, he wrote his infamous book againſt the celebacy of the clergy;—through your inſinuations and aſſiſtance he had tried infernal powers, and made the dæmons ſubſervient to his will.—Look round on theſe hapleſs victims, and ſee the effects of his diabolical magic."

"As he ſpoke this, the nuns began to throw themſelves into horrible fits; their ſhrieks rent the hall with ſhocking ſounds! I muſt confeſs, I was rather alarmed;—but recollecting all the paſt proceedings againſt De Caſtelle, wherein he had been accuſed of poſſeſſing theſe nuns with evil ſpirits, I imagined them only playing of ſome of their former artifices, the more powerfully to ſtrengthen his enemies.—The bigot father Lactance, ſmiled with a pleaſure his arts were not ſufficient maſter to conceal.

"My

"My mind ſoon regained its ſerenity; this abominable conſpiracy increaſed my indignation! and I caſt on the whole group a contemptuous ſmile, without ſeeming the leaſt moved by the ſhrieks and convulſions of thoſe execrable wretches!

"Dampiere, pointing to me, ſaid,—"Your eminence ſees how hardened in wickedneſs this unfeeling wretch is;—will you pleaſe to condemn her, for hitherto no confeſſion has been drawn that can aid our cauſe againſt that horrid contriver De Caſtelle.—Elinor de Montmorenci, what have you to ſay?"

"But little.—Every thing his eminence has ſaid, he has been miſinformed in.—I never knew any of the crimes, he is pleaſed to ſay De Caſtelle charges me with, for his exerciſing magic.—I have not the belief that he, or any one elſe, has the power—the Almighty would not permit it, much leſs am I guilty of aſſiſting

ing him.—It is the infernal powers of his vile and abominable accuſers; that baſe conſpiracy, whoſe ſecret machinations have framed this abſurd contrivance to undermine his blameleſs character, proteſting he knows the art of magic; thinking, by deluding a ſimple people that way, to gloſs over the villainy that lurks in your hearts.—But there is a God above, a juſt and aweful God—before whoſe tribunal, you muſt all one day appear: and if your wicked contrivances prevail;—if you take the lives of your devoted victims, and treat us with unrelenting cruelty here on earth, I cannot believe it in your power to deny us peace in the world to come.—We may be happy, when miſery purſues you. And is it poſſible to imagine, women, who have devoted themſelves to heaven, could be capable of ſuch enormities! Wretched beings that you are,—the minions of De Caſtelle's accuſers, (for I cannot call them by

by any other name,) you will ſoon feel the vengeance of a righteous God, who knows the hearts, the vile hearts, that inhabit breaſts of adamant.—There is an eye that marks ye!

"My Lord, the Cardinal, I did hope, his good ſenſe would not yield to the abſurdities which are perceptible, to the moſt common capacity, not willfully blind, and hardened to every feeling of humanity,—and more ſorry am I, to remind him of the paſt ſervices my father had done for his eminence, which it pleaſes him to forget.—The recollection of which led me to hope, I ſhould find a friend, who would rejoice it lay in his power to return an obligation, and free me from my cruel chains, and the unwarrantable power that holds me.—I am deceived, and bow reſigned, waiting your pleaſure."

"I really was aſtoniſhed to find they would ſuffer me to continue talking ſo long,

long, without interrupting me: but it ſeemed as if they were all confounded.—A few moments of painful ſuſpenſe ſucceeded.—The Cardinal then roſe, and pronounced my doom, which was—"That he perceived the doom of death would give me pleaſure: in his opioion, I had invited it, but my expectations ſhould be defeated: therefore, he declared, I ſhould linger out a life of miſery, be condemned to my cell ſtrongly ſecured, with only the moſt ſcanty allowance of common proviſion to ſuſtain a wretched exiſtence—never more to ſee the light of heaven."

"Even in thoſe caverns of wretchedneſs, to which your eminence is pleaſed to conſign me, my ſufferings will not debar me the mercies of heaven, and though prohibited ever more to gaze on that glorious orb of day, of which, by your cruel decree, I am now about to take a laſt

laſt ſurvey, I ſhall derive a conſolation, in a retroſpect of my own life and conduct, which the ſhaft of calumny has never dared to profane.—And, oh! Almighty power! endue me to ſuffer with patience, and ſave me from deſpondency;" was my reply.

"The Abbeſs now ordered the nuns to return with me. The irrevocable doom was fixed, the dreadful aſſembly broke up, and I was led back to my cell of horrors, ſtrongly guarded."

CHAP.

CHAP. XIV.

"MY lamp and coarſe proviſions were ſerved as before.—I ſtrove to reconcile myſelf to my fate, and prayed inceſſantly for death to free me, before that fatal period arrived that would increaſe my affliction, and drive me to madneſs; as I now ſaw the impoſſibility of being releaſed, but by the hand of death, whoſe aid I courted in vain.

"But my nights, and ſome of my days, were more diſtreſſing, for in addition to the ſound of female cries, I could at times hear heart-breaking groans, that ſeemed to proceed from men.

"I could not conceive how this could be poſſible, as I knew of no men being in our convent, but the Director:—to aſk of either of the nuns who brought my

victuals, I knew would be uſeleſs, as if I ſpoke, no anſwer was ever returned.

"At length one of the nuns, who in general came to me, looked unuſually melancholy, and grew ill. One day I was ſurpriſed that ſhe came alone, and more ſo, when ſhe ſpoke to me.—My firſt inquiry was about the groans, which I thought ſounded like a man's voice. "O," ſhe replied, "the monaſtery of the Dominicans, is about a quarter of a mile from our convent, and I have heard ſay, that the vaults extend a great way, and meet in ſome places; wherefore, I ſuppoſe that is the reaſon you hear men's voices." I thanked her, and ſhe left me, but ſoon returned with ſomething rolled up in a paper, which ſhe preſented to me, —"What is it?" ſaid I:—"Alas!" ſhe replied, "I want for nothing, while you have ſcarce ſufficient to keep you alive—it is my dinner; I put it by for you, knowing

knowing how great muſt be your wants to mine."

Surpriſed, I gazed on her, and ſaid, "lives there a ſoul ſo generous in this convent, to feel for my wants and diſtreſſes? —I ſincerely thank you, but do not deprive yourſelf of all for me."

"I am too ſad to eat," ſhe replied; "I cannot convey to you a ſenſe of what I now feel;" and ſhe ſtood gazing wildly at me for ſome minutes, and really in great agony.

"What is the matter, ſiſter Clara?—why gaze you thus?"

"Will you pray for me, Elinor?—Pray for my ſoul's peace?"

"That I will," I replied with fervor.

"Ah! but where ſhall I find it?" ſaid Clara, "I have wronged you, and wronged De Caſtelle.—When firſt our director encouraged us in counterfeiting fits, he ſaid it was for a frolic to jeſt one of his friends

upon—by gradual degrees he attained the ſummit of his wiſhes—little did I ſuppoſe it was the parent of ſuch crimes and accuſations that have ſince ſucceeded too powerfully;—De Caſtelle is innocent, our conſpiracy alone is guilty, and alone able to make him appear ſo—his enemies are reſolved on his ruin."

"Ah!" exclaimed I,—"is it not poſſible to ſave an innocent man?"

"No," replied Clara, "but I will give a proof of my abhorrence of the part I have acted, as two more have done, ſiſter Agnes, and ſiſter Frances, they have long deteſted the conſpiracy againſt him, and only determined how to act this day.—I have written a paper, expreſſing my guilt and ſhame, nor can I live to bear it.—I ſeek death in theſe caverns, Elinor, to eaſe my heart of a weight, I cannot longer ſuſtain."

"Good

" Good heaven !—what mean you ?"

" To die, Elinor."

" Oh ! add not to the guilt thy ſoul is already charged with !—" ſaid I, " nor raſhly ruſh into the preſence of thy incenſed God, with the crime of ſelf-murder —live and repent."

" I cannot live ;—were it known that I repented, ſevereſt tortures would ſucceed —condemned to linger out a life like you; and is not death a bleſſing to that ?"

" But who ſhall dare preſent herſelf before the Almighty ſooner than he wills it ?—who ſhall dare to ſay—Lord ! thus much will I bear, and no more ;—think on what will follow."

" I have, Elinor, whether I live or die, I ſee nothing but deſpair.—O the retroſpect of an ill-ſpent life ! how horrible, more particularly ill, by wantonly conſenting to villify the innocent.—God bleſs and comfort you, and bleſs De Caſtelle,

and may our holy virgin protect him againſt the combination of his enemies. Farewell, forgive and pray for me."

"Clara darted from me, and I ſaw her no more; but towards evening the abbeſs and her attendants entered the vault, to know the reaſon of her long ſtay.—I heard them ſhriek, the cauſe was, ſiſter Clara was found hanging in the vault; all ſeemed in conſternation, and the abbeſs was nearly diſtracted, when ſhe obſerved the paper on her breaſt, declaring her abhorrence at having taken part with them in accuſing De Caſtelle.

"Whatever became of the body of the unhappy Clara I never heard, for they ſoon after left the vault, and many tedious hapleſs days, have I ſince paſſed there. I reſigned myſelf up to my cruel deſtiny; and deſpair, in ſpite of all my endeavors, had nearly ſeized me, when, to my aſtoniſhment,

niſhment, Alphonſo appeared. I aſſure you I doubted my ſenſes, and believed it to be the error of imagination, and when he ſpoke, I ſcarcely dared to hope it was him—for how was it poſſible he could gain admittance into theſe vaults?

" My grief renewed, when he ſaid, he was alſo a priſoner, but he endeavoured to cheer me with a ray of hope, by declaring, he would ſeek the means of eſcape; and I think the time never ſeemed ſo long, or I felt ſo anxious, during my confinement, as from the time he left me till the period of his return.

" The pleaſure I felt when I heard him ſay, he had obtained the means of eſcape, I cannot expreſs; it ſeemed to ſeize on every faculty, my tongue almoſt denied its office, and my feet from long diſ-uſe, refuſed me ſupport. To Alphonſo's generous care, I am indebted for my liberty and life, and the life of one, who will be

as

as dear to me, as my own. He kindly conveyed me through that abode of horrors, when at the time, freedom preſented itſelf, my ſtrength refuſed the means of obtaining it:—and never Alphonſo, never, whilſt life inhabits the being of Elinor, will ſhe forget the obligation."

Here Elinor ended her narrative,—Madame de Belmont and Alphonſo, thanked her for the melancholy recital, and joined in returning ſincere thanks to the giver of all good, for the mercies beſtowed on them, and their timely releaſe, from ſufferings almoſt unheard of.

Elinor was anxious to let her father know of her ſafety, and Alphonſo not knowing how, leſt, if they wrote, and any accident ſhould come to the letter.—He determined to write a ſhort billet, and ſend it by Euſtace, whom the Count de Montmorenci well knew.—The note was:—

"Fear

"Fear not to follow the bearer, to where he will conduct you. You will then see, and embrace your daughter in safety."—*And,* Elinor added:

"My father, I long to see you; an age of misery I have suffered since last I had the happiness—Thank God, I am now safe, and anxiously await your arrival, my well known hand, will be a witness to you, as this letter must be anonymous."

Madame de Belmont, after preparing every thing for Elinor in the apartment designed for her, took leave of them for the night, promising to dispatch Eustace with the letter early in the morning, with orders to give it into the Count's own hand, as they feared to direct it.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

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